

“A Review - Romans 1-4”

Romans - the Gospel of God

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Jeff: Our gracious Father in heaven, we thank You. We bow before You this morning. And we know that You are exceedingly good. You are much better to us than we deserve. And yet, because of Your Son the Lord Jesus Christ, You have brought us into a relationship with Yourself; You have brought us into Your family. And there is a very real sense in which the world does not treat us as we deserve because we are Your sons and daughters; we are sons of the King. And we thank You for that and bow before You in humility, recognizing that it's a status we do not deserve. And yet we have it through the Lord Jesus Christ and by His Spirit working in us. Our Father, as we think upon these things we recognize that we are not alone, that Your Spirit accompanies us and gives direction to our thoughts, not by our own imagination but by Your word, leading our thoughts deeper into Your thoughts so that we might think them after You.

Father, as we study Your word, we find it a great joy and a comfort. We find here in Your word preserved indeed for the sure comfort of Your church and yet for the preservation of the truth. And the truth is wearing away in these days. And so we ask that You will continue to raise up men who love the truth, who are willing to speak it in times when it's unpopular, and who are even willing to die for it. Lord, we ask that You will shape this room of men, and that You'll shape them after Yourself. And that will likely be the cruciformed life; we pray that it is. For a life of humiliation and a life that follows Christ in His humiliation leads to glory.

Lord, we ask now that You will care for those things that are on our minds and hearts. Lord, we certainly pray for our brother Kevin; we ask that You'll bless him. We pray that You'll give him strength and endurance. We pray that You'll bless his wife too, especially his wife since she has opted not to receive surgery so that she can continue to care for Kevin. Lord, we pray for Gregg and ask that You would continue to be with him and his family.

Father, we pray for Laurie. And we're thankful that so far things have been successful. We pray that would continue to be the case. We lift her up to you and ask for healing. And we ask, Lord, that You would continue to strengthen her heart and her mind in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, we pray for Matt also. And in these turbulent times, even if it is normal for his line of work to transition people from one company to the next, we just pray that You'll keep his heart stayed and his eyes upon You. And we pray that You'll give him work soon if it be the case that he loses his job. Lord, we ask that You'll bring him something better, something that fulfills even more, and something that meets his needs and the needs of his family.

Father, we're thankful for Your hand upon us, for Your good hand upon us and for the way in which You minister to us by others. And Father, we're thankful that as we come that we come together, and many of us have known one another for a while, and some longer than that. Lord, we're thankful for the group, for the way in which You have blessed us. Please continue to do so. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Well we're going to take up Romans today. Now we've not been in Romans for a long time and I can't remember why. But it's okay. Don spoke up and said he'd like to go back to Romans. I checked and we ended up finishing chapter 4. And so we're going to take up chapter 5 today. But I thought that maybe we ought to at least take a couple of minutes to review where we've been so we have an idea of what we were thinking before we left off, or at least what Paul was thinking before we left off. So what I'd like to do is that I'd just like to trace the

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argument. And in tracing the argument if you have questions, if you'd like to pause for a minute, I'd welcome that. But I'd like to get us up to chapter 5 and then we can start there.

If you will remember, there is an introduction that goes from 1-17 of chapter 1. Now there's a lot here, certainly so, especially if you think about what he says in verses 1-4. I mean, this is really amazing stuff, because what he is saying here is that the gospel was promised by God in the Old Testament through the Prophets, which means that the gospel is not something new; it's not a surprise. It's something that was given in the Old Testament and brought to fruition with the appearance of Jesus Christ in the New. And in fact, in these verses we're told that the promise of the gospel was the promise of His Son. So there's a lot here and we've been over this already. But I just thought this is really important stuff to bring to your attention as we start.

Something else. When you think about this introduction one of the things that you immediately think of is the first part of an inclusio. And remember what an inclusio is. Don is laughing already, but it's true. And Don, why don't you tell us what an inclusio is?

Don Maurer: A bookend.

Jeff: It is a bookend. And so this is the first part of the bookend, and it is in verse 5. And you'll notice the phrase: “*the obedience of faith.*” And then if you were to go to chapter 16 and look in verse 26 you'll notice there is that same phrase: “*the obedience of faith.*” And that really bookends the entire book of Romans. In other words, there's a certain sense if you want a pithy way of just summarizing the book of Romans, then that might be it: “*the obedience of faith.*”

What is the obedience of faith? Well, the obedience of faith is the obedience that flows from faith. And so one of the things that we read when we read the book of Romans is that we read this book that talks to us really in a systematic way about how one is saved and then how one grows in the faith. And we've looked already through chapter 4. And in chapter 5 we're going to get into this whole idea of justification. We've already even had that a bit with chapter 4. But in chapter 5 we're going to get into more of that idea of justification. And then it's in chapters 6-8 where we move to sanctification and assurance. And so then in chapters 9, 10 and 11 we talk about predestination and election. In chapter 12 we talk about things that are of sort of a mixed bag. We talk about all kinds of injunctions. We talk about the government. We talk about *adiaphora* issues, and so on. So lots of things after chapter 11. But anyway, that's the obedience that flows from faith.

And then Paul talks about his plans to visit them. And then he really gets to his purpose statement which is in verses 16 and 17. In other words this is the purpose statement that he's going to unfold and unpack throughout the rest of the book of Romans.

Now that's really the introduction. And in verse 18 we find that he really begins the long opening argument. And you probably remember this pretty well because it's in 18 through the end of the chapter that he really takes them to task.

And who are they? Well, the they and the them are the Gentiles—not just the Gentiles who are out there—but these are the Gentiles that have hopefully been brought into the church, and some of them are in the church. We quickly find in this book—this book that we have a tendency to think of as systematic theology as it gets in the New Testament—in this book we actually find that there is a lot of Jew/Gentile stuff. In other words, we have a tendency to think that Ephesians 2 is Jew/Gentile stuff; Galatians is Jew/Gentile stuff; much of Acts is the same. We don't have a tendency to think about Romans as being Jew and Gentile stuff. And yet it is. There is a lot about Jew/Gentile relationships in this book. And this is where it begins.

Why? Because Paul really takes Gentile behaviors to task. And if you look in chapter 2 at the start of it, he begins basically to deal not with the Gentiles. But he now starts to turn his attention

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to the Jew. And this is because the Jew seemingly is in the back of the congregation saying, “You tell ‘em, Paul, because they really need to hear this!” And so he’s saying these things to the Jew.

For instance, *“Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges.”* Who are they passing judgment on? They’re passing judgment on the Gentiles as we previously mentioned. *“For in passing judgment on one another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.”*

So who is the they and them? It’s the Gentiles. And who is the you? It’s the Jewish man who seems to be in agreement that the Gentiles are condemned.

And then this goes on. And he says this in verse 6: *“He will render to each one according to his works.”* Now it’s not them and it’s not you; it’s “to each one God will render according to his works.” And what he does is, he basically says that the Judge of all the earth will show no partiality. And in chapter 3 we’re going to get that everyone falls short of the glory of God. But he’s making his way to that statement. And his point up until now is that both of you are under condemnation.

Now part of this is really interesting because look at what he says. He’s continuing in this argument in verse 12. *“For all who have sinned without the law will perish without the law. And all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law.”*

Now he goes on to say that when the Gentile sins he is sinning against the law written on his heart. And when the Jew sins he’s sinning against the tablets written on stone.

And then the last part is the very end of the chapter. At the very end of the chapter the Jew pulls out his trump card, that card that’s up his sleeve that he throws down on the table, which is circumcision. Okay, Paul. All right, fine. You’ve got us coming and going on the law; that’s fine; we know that. But we’re the circumcised.

And then look at what Paul says. He says, *“Circumcision is indeed of value if you obey the law. But if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.”* In other words, if you trust in circumcision as a bare sign to save you, you are done, dead in the water, because circumcision doesn’t work like that. In other words, circumcision doesn’t simply work your salvation out for you; it doesn’t do that. It is a sign of something inner. And you may have the outer without the inner, just like you might have the inner without the outer. If you have the inner then you strive to get the outer, because that’s called being a member of the church, right? But the point is that you can’t just have the outer sign and claim salvation, because it doesn’t work like that.

And so that’s where he ends up. Basically he ends up saying that Jews and Gentiles are both condemned by the law—not necessarily by the law alone, but by their behavior in the face of the law. They don’t meet up with the law, and none of us can.

So what does he say? He goes on to basically say in chapter 3, are the Jews better off? No. Are the Greeks? No. All are under sin. And then he says, “None is righteous, not one.” *“No one understands; no one seeks God,”* and so on. And then he goes into that whole idea that all are condemned before the living God because there is no one righteous.

And then that’s when you get into verse 21 of chapter 3. But let me stop there just for a minute and ask. Any questions that you want to sort of follow up on? That’s a big chunk of Scripture. But that’s basically where we’re at. No? Okay.

So then in verse 21 of chapter 3, what you get is, you get this great reversal. *“But now,”* right? But now what? *“But now the righteousness of God has been manifest apart from the law.”*

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Now when you think about this—but now—go back to 1:18 for just a minute. In 1:18, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*” And then 3:21: “*But now the righteousness of God has been manifest apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it.*” In other words, in unrighteousness men suppress the truth. But God has revealed His righteousness that was testified to in the Old Testament by the Law and the Prophets. In other words the law of God proclaimed the gospel!

Isn’t that amazing when you think about it? The law proclaimed the gospel. And so the righteousness of God that is now manifest is a righteousness of God “*through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.*” And then he says that “*there is no distinction. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”

And then he just basically walks us through some ideas here that we’ve walked through before. But I want you to notice a few of them. First of all he talks about propitiation. He says that Jesus “*was put forward as a propitiation by His blood.*” And that’s to be received by faith.

Now what is that? Well, that whole idea of propitiation is that God’s wrath has been removed. But the word *hilesterion* is a little bit bigger than that. And here it basically encompasses more than just a removal of wrath. But I think it actually encompasses two things. We translate them in two different ways. One is *expiation* and the other is *propitiation*.

Expiation is basically the fixing of the problem, and propitiation is the removal of wrath. Don, I don’t mean to drag out any dirty laundry here. But let’s just say imaginarily that Don was over at the Myers’ house. Let’s just say he had some bourbon balls and he had one too many.

Don Maurer: Oh! (*Laughter*) Let me tell you the true story.

Jeff: I didn’t want to say it; I said imaginarily, Don! (*Laughter*)

Don: Oh, all right.

Jeff: Let’s just say that Don was tickling the keys at the keyboard when he happened to stand up on the bench and decided to take off his shirt. (*Laughter*) He waved it around and threw it through the window. Now at that point Roger—

Transcriber’s Note: Don stands up and starts to take off his shirt. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Ho, ho! (*Laughter*) At that point Roger is upset with Don.

Don: No!

Jeff: Yes. And there is no pacifying. So a week later Don comes over and installs the window himself. (*Laughter*) He does.

Ted Wood: Oh, gosh! That would be a miracle; I’d love to see that (*Laughter*)

Jeff: And so then he walked up to the door, rang the doorbell and he said, “Roger, you may have noticed that I’ve been outside fixing your window.” And Roger kind of answers him coldly.

Roger Myers: Hmm.

Jeff: And Don says, “Rog, the window has been fixed.” (*Laughter*) “What’s the problem?” (*Laughter*)

And Roger says, “But I’m still mad at you.” And see, that’s the difference.

Ted: I’m with you.

Jeff: Yeah, that’s the difference. And so expiation not only fixes the problem, but satisfies the anger. That’s the idea.

Don Maurer: Do you mean propitiation?

Jeff: Propitiation satisfies the anger. Expiation fixes the problem.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: And so Christ is both an expiation and a propitiation on our behalf, okay?

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Ted: Jeff?

Jeff: Yes?

Ted: That’s an interesting point. Let’s pause for a minute; I just thought of this.

Jeff: Sure.

Ted: Because there can be propitiation--that means doing away with wrath—by simply having God say, “Well, boys will be boys; girls will be girls; humans will be humans; it’s no big deal. So I’m not angry anymore; it wasn’t important enough to get angry about.”

Jeff: Yeah.

Ted: So you could have propitiation without sacrifice.

Jeff: You mean you could have it that way?

Ted: Yes, you could.

Jeff: Okay.

Ted: I mean, that’s what liberal theologians basically say: that God’s love is so great that God’s wrath and His holiness is not that important of an issue.

Jeff: Yes. It’s interesting.

Ted: I’m just saying a for instance. I mean, my Episcopal priest daughter would think that.

Jeff: Yeah. Well actually, it’s interesting. It’s not just the liberals who might think that. What did you say?

Ted: The Reformed Presbyterians? *(Laughter)*

Jeff: No, no. Actually within Christendom there is a little bit of a difference. For instance there are some who would say, kind of tracing your thought, that God’s wrath could be satisfied through anything. For instance, there are some who would say that what God could have said was sort of a wave of a branch, or something; anything. It kind of like Him saying “It’s not a big deal,” right? Anything could have met these qualifications, right?

Ted: Right.

Jeff: God could have done anything He wanted to. Protestants have a tendency to say it differently. Protestants have a tendency to say no. The only thing that could have fixed the problem and satisfied God’s wrath is the blood of Christ. And John Murray, for instance, would get that from Hebrews 2 verse 17, where it says that “*Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of His people.*” So Protestants have a tendency to say that it couldn’t have been just anything that would fix and satisfy, right?

Now you know, you have to go back a step further and say, “Well, this is the box that God is making.” That is to say, at the very beginning God made it such that the only way that wrath could be satisfied—that sin could be expiated and wrath could be satisfied—is by a sacrifice of blood. And so therefore Jesus had to be made, and so on. So I think it just depends on how far you step back.

Ted: You say that because the Torah insists on that kind of propitiation.

Jeff: What are you going to do? Are you going to recite this to us in Hebrew again?
(Laughter) This guy is amazing.

Ted: I’m just saying that’s the basis of it. I think that’s what a lot of Christians of various different ilks have a problem with.

Jeff: Right.

Ted: They have problems with the need for propitiation.

Jeff: Yes, and how it’s done, right?

Ted: Well, that’s right—the need for it and the way it’s done, as prescribed in the Torah.

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Jeff: Yeah. Because, you know, you get to Leviticus. And you have Leviticus and you have all the sacrifices described in the first five books. And then you have chapter 16. And then people want to know why you have this kind of exploration of mold and mildew, and sores on people’s bodies and things like that. And really it’s to deepen our understanding of sin and the fix, right? People have a tendency to kind of put that off, you know?

They see no need for the Old Testament. And yet, if we really believe the New Testament, the New Testament tells us that the gospel was promised in the Old. And how was it promised? Through signs and types and shadows—all those things that pre-figured Christ. And therefore the Old becomes really important for understanding the New, right?

If you want to learn about something you have a tendency to want to go back and trace out the roots and understand causes and effects, and why we got to where we are, to know the history of it then. And by knowing the history it deepens your understanding of the thing itself. So that’s the idea. At the very least the Old Testament deepens our understanding of Christ’s work.

A lot of people don’t think of it that way. Why would I need to go back to the Old Testament when I have Christ? He’s here in the New Testament; I just have to read the Gospels. And yet, when you read the Old Testament it provides a really deep foundation for the Gospels and all that Jesus is doing, the richness.

Ron Baling: Many of my liberal acquaintances are dealing with sexual issues now.

Jeff: Uh-huh.

Ron: They are accepting of sin. (*Unclear*) They mistake my adamancy for the law as being filled with anger.

Jeff: Yeah. It gets turned around about you, right? This is a problem of you, you know? And that’s the shame of it all. But that’s really what happens. What happens is, you get a whole new set of morality and maxims that govern our culture. And we’re out of step with them; that’s really what it’s about, right? The new morality is that we accept gay, lesbian and trans- people as virtuous. And if we’re not willing to accept that, we’re the great sinners, right?

Ron: Tolerance must be accepted.

Jeff: Yeah. And that goes back to this. If you go back to Romans chapter 1, remember what he says in Romans chapter 1. This is actually at the end of the chapter. Verse 32: *“Though they know God’s righteous decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but they give approval to those who practice them.”* And so, you know, this is kind of the new norm, right? I want you to give approval, your approval.

I was teaching elsewhere and I had an older gentleman come to me and tell me that his grandchild had become a trans- person. And I can’t remember which direction. But he was telling me, “I don’t know what to do.” He said, “I’ve said to my grandchild, ‘I’ll love you and you’ll always be my grandchild no matter what you do to yourself.’”

But the grandchild turned to him and said, “That’s not enough. You have to agree that what I’m doing is right.”

And he said, “I can’t do that. How can I do that?”

I said, “You can’t do that.” And so this whole dilemma that we’re in these days—Go ahead, Don.

Don Maurer: Finish first.

Jeff: Well no, that was basically it. Go ahead.

Don: Getting back to the need for propitiation, there are some people who I would call liberal but not flaming liberals, but people who profess to be evangelicals who use the term “cosmic child abuse.”

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Jeff: Yes.

Don: So far as to be blasphemous.

Jeff: Right.

Don: It’s so glorious and rich—the atonement—what Christ went through for us, and they would say “cosmic child abuse.”

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: But it was the Father who sent the Son. It’s the Father who loved us.

Jeff: Yeah. And that’s really a struggle, isn’t it?, because that’s part of the problem. The world tries to find ways to caricature the church and the theology of the church. It sort of narrowly puts it into categories that even we in the culture would say, “Oh, that’s not a good thing,” right? We would want to avoid that.

And child abuse is one of those, right? We would say that we would all be against child abuse. Oddly enough they wouldn’t be because they abuse children when they change their sex, or at least attempt to.

I was talking to somebody. I can say this in a crowd of men. I was talking to someone on the phone the other night. I was talking to Rosaria Butterfield the other night. She said this to me, and I don’t think she would mind me saying this to you. She goes, “Jeff, when you think about these trans-gender surgeries, when you cut somebody off and make a wound, if you try to transition a man to be a woman, when you open an opening on their bodies, the body sees it as what? It’s a wound. And the body tries to close it up.” And no matter how you slice it, this is the

Ted: So it’s a wound.

Jeff: Yeah. So we’re in a situation in our culture where the body actually witnesses against the current philosophy of the day. And the current philosophy of the day is trying to suppress the truth of what the body is telling it in unrighteousness. And let’s face it: the body is a testimony of truth to these people that they hate. And so when it says that they “*suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*” that’s not an abstractly suppressed theology where we suppress secular psychology or we suppress bad theology. Here’s an example of where these people are suppressing the truth that the body is proclaiming in unrighteousness.

Ron: (*Unclear*)

Jeff: Anybody else? Anything else on this? No? Okay. So one of the things that you find—and I probably mentioned this to you back when we were doing this,—but in 3:27 to the end of the chapter what you find is, you find that this section actually unfolds chapter 4. So if you want a summary of what chapter 4 is, read 3:27-31.

Transcriber’s Note: Romans 4:27-31, NKJV. “*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.*”

“*Or is the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.*”

Jeff: Because in verse 27 you get 4:1 and 2. “Then what becomes of our boasting?” And that’s what he deals with in 4:1 and 2.

Transcriber’s Note: Romans 4:1-2, NKJV. “*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*”

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And then in 4:3-8 what does he deal with? “*For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*”

Transcriber’s Note: ESV.

Jeff: This is where he asks the question: When was Abraham justified? And then in 4:9-12: “*Is He not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since God is one.*” And then he talks about Jews and Gentiles.

And in 4:13-25 he talks about how the law is not overthrown by faith. And that brings us to chapter 5. And so unless you have questions about chapter 4 I think I’ll just head into chapter 5. Don?

Don Maurer: Just one comment. I may have said this when we were going through chapter 3. The one thing that Rome chokes on is imputation. They choke on the idea that Christ has given us His righteousness.

Jeff: Uh-huh.

Don: His perfect righteousness. It’s not infused into us; it’s not something that increases and can be lost. It’s something that is given to us, and therefore it’s ours forever. I think you had said at one time that this was the whole issue with the Jesuits. Robert Bellarmine said it was presumptuous to think that you’re saved forever. Didn’t he say something like that?

Jeff: Yeah. He said that the greatest heresy of the Protestants is their view of assurance, which comes from what you’re saying. That’s right.

Don: Yeah.

Jeff: So—

Ted: So would he say that we just don’t know? Would he say that we don’t have an assurance?

Jeff: Well, his major problem was that the Protestants to his way of thinking were saying that we’re saved by faith alone and not by anything that you do. And so I guess you can live like hell and have this assurance. And so his idea was—I’m not dancing. (*Laughter*) If that’s trying to force me to dance, I’m not dancing. (*Laughter*)

Brave Man: Maybe Don will dance.

Don Maurer: Yeah, that’s right.

Jeff: Yeah, that’s right.

Don: Give me some rum balls.

Jeff: That’s right.

Don: Let me set the record straight. I only ate one. Well, I ate one before Jeff came and one when he was there. And he said, “Don, put the whole thing in your mouth.” (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Don, can we—I don’t know if we’re close enough to actually get that on the recording. (*Laughter*) You know, I’m not sure that’s fair, because our transcriber may just—

Roger: Edit it. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Yeah. And we’ll just read “muffled voice here.” (*Laughter*) All right. Rum balls! Anyway, yes?

Ted: I know that we’re saved by faith alone, right?

Jeff: Right; mm-hmm.

Ted: Perhaps it would be more accurate or foundational to say that we’re saved by union with Christ alone which brings faith. Then it becomes a living faith.

Jeff: Well, personally I don’t think we have to adjust our theology to satisfy Robert Bellarmine or people like him. I think what we say is that what Calvin said during the Reformation is very satisfying. There is a twofold grace of God. And I possess forensic benefits

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and I possess the transformative, which means that if I say I’m justified then I’m adopted and possess all of those forensic benefits, then I’d better be transformed. I’m in the process of becoming what I am in Jesus Christ, and so my life is changing. But I guess the issue is that a Protestant might say something like I could commit (a certain sin.) Part of the issue between Roman Catholics and Protestants is the whole idea of what’s contributed on my part, to my own salvation, right?

And so that’s a pretty big deal. If I’m saying that even the transformative benefits are not contributing anything to my salvation and final justification then I’m wrong there, right?, because they would say that they are, right? Do you disagree?

Ted: I’m not disagreeing. I don’t want to take up the conversation with this, but I think that even what we bring has been given to us already, right?

Jeff: Right. I think—

Ted: For me it’s not so much a matter of me initiating it but me experiencing it.

Jeff: Yeah.

Ted: If it means that we say that we have been made to sit with Him in the heavenlies, as a past tense, then something is already happening—something so profound that it cannot be exceeded. If we have been made to sit with Him in the heavenlies, I don’t know what else we could do.

Jeff: Well, I agree. But my own view is that as soon as you talk about purgatory you’ve introduced the idea that the wrath of God has not been fully satisfied by Christ.

Ted: And that’s a huge problem.

Jeff: Yes. And once you talk about that you immediately talk about something I contribute to the equation in order to satisfy God’s wrath.

Ted: Right.

Jeff: Jim?

Jim Hamilton: Well I just think this is so complicated that I’m wondering where I’m standing before the Lord. My own view is that all I need is from Him and I ask for it often. But I continue to sin. All this other stuff I don’t understand and I’m not going to worry about it.

Ted: But the thing is that if we don’t worry about it then it becomes a matter of what you’re doing, because I repent. And I’m kept in God’s good standing by my repentance. It’s almost like my need for the sacraments. In the Catholic Church you are really not on a good standing unless you’re up to speed with the sacraments.

Jim: I believe that I continue to cry out for forgiveness because I sin all the time.

Ted: Yes.

Jim: I think He will forgive me.

Jeff: Well, I think that if you cast yourself on Christ by faith alone that you’re forgiven.

Jim: Right.

Ted: But you already have that assurance because of your standing with Him.

Jeff: Well I think this is great. Go ahead, please.

Ted: If we don’t have assurance and we don’t live a disciplined life, then that’s evidence that you haven’t been made to sit with Him in the heavenlies.

Don Maurer: Amen.

Ted: That’s it. So to me the greatest mystery is why I persist in sinning.

Jeff: Yes. So for instance, let me ask this. Are we talking about incidental sins or are we talking about patterns of sin? Because the only thing I would say is—

Brave Man: Both.

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Jeff: It is both. And I would say that oftentimes we talk about incidental sins. But for instance, as a pastor I could have somebody come to me who says, “Pastor, I’m struggling with pornography.”

Ted: Yeah.

Jeff: And it’s not an incidental sin, right?

Ted: It’s persistent.

Jeff: It’s a persistent sin; it’s got a pattern to it. And so because they’re struggling through the pattern of this sin I don’t say, “You’re not a believer.” But what I have to say to them is that the grace of Christ is able to overcome even this sin.

Now I think there are a bunch of reasons why women have their own sins. But men struggle with this particular sin. But I think that it’s more complicated than that. For instance, let’s just take pornography for a minute; let’s take that sin. Let’s even take that and drug addiction. Let’s say that somebody is addicted to drugs. Because typically, as we indeed stand outside of the life of this person, we can see progress that they cannot see. And what happens is, they actually lose their assurance of their own salvation quicker than I lose my hope of Christ for them.

For instance, this is why we’re not to judge the heart. Sessions, for instance, are to discipline. They have to end up judging behaviors to be outside of the pale of Christianity, and so they have to excommunicate someone. And that excommunicated person is to be considered not a brother. However, will they ultimately return? Well, that’s the whole point of what excommunication is all about. Hopefully they will return and repent of their sins, and to show themselves all the while to have been a grievously sinning brother, right?

And so you rejoice; the lost one has been found. But we don’t know that until they repent. What’s the difference between a partial apostate and a full apostate? Repentance.

But having all that down, what about this person you’re working with? Well, this person you’re working with, in fact somebody who is sinning grievously like that may, will lose that assurance. I can tell you right now that when you struggle with someone who is addicted to porn or addicted to drugs, or you name it; you name the sin, that you’re going to be fighting at least a two-front battle. You’re going to be fighting a battle that says put down the drugs. And you are this in Christ. And so start believing this about yourself, because if you don’t believe this about yourself then you have no resources, because Christ is your only resource to put this down. And if you don’t believe that you have this resource, you are lost, right?—that sort of thing. So you’re fighting a two-front war.

So I would rather say from spiritual birth to—let’s put it this way—consummation, where death or Jesus comes first, the person may be excommunicated. But again, we don’t know if this person was genuinely born again. Like John says, “They went out from us because they were never of us.” Until they return in this period we say, “Not a brother.” But when they return we say, “Ah! This was a brother caught in sin and grievously so,” and so forth.

So I guess what I’m saying to you is no, it’s not as easy as this. But one of the things that is easy is to say that if I’m saved, it is by faith alone. But then what Ted was saying is yes, but if you’re saved by faith alone that faith is never alone, and will be accompanied by good works. And you have to give a hearty amen to both of those, because that’s the twofold grace of Christ. Does that make sense?

Jim: Yeah.

Jeff: Does that make sense to you men? This is an important topic.

Don Bishop: Ephesians 2:8-10.

Jeff: Can our say that one more time?

“A Review - Romans 1-4”

Don: That’s the whole line of Ephesians 2:8-10.

Jeff: Yes. That’s right.

Brave Man: What is that?

Jeff: it’s “*For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that we should walk in them.*”

Ron: Our actions are a monitor of our faith.

Jeff: Yeah. And you guys have heard me say this before, but I think it’s important to just kind of keep it in mind. For instance, let me draw Don here.

Prescriber’s Note: Jeff draws a picture of a giraffe.

Ted: Don doesn’t look like that.

Jeff: Oh yes he does, and you know it. *(Laughter)*

Brave Man: He has a long neck.

Jeff: He does have a long neck. *(Laughter)*

Ted: That is scary.

Jeff: That is scary. He looks like he’s playing the keyboard; he’s tickling those keys, that’s right. *(Laughter)* So anyway, what we have here is that we have mind, we have heart. We need to give Don a red heart because you know that Don’s favorite holiday is coming. Did you know that?

Don Maurer: No. My favorite holiday was a month ago.

Jeff: It’s Valentine’s Day, and don’t let him tell you differently. *(Laughter)* He is a closet romantic. *(Laughter)*

Ted: He is? I thought he was a closet Roman Catholic.

Brave Men: Ooohh!

Don: Only on Christmas and Good Friday. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: All right. So we have Don’s affections. And then we have the will. So we have the mind, we have the will, and we have the affections. And these things correspond to saving faith. When we think about saving faith we think about what we call *notitia*. And that has to do with our minds: a renewed mind. Right now we suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Then the will has to do with our assent to these things that we know. And then the affections have to do with *iducia*, or our trust.

Don Maurer: Who should I go out with for a date on Valentine’s Day: Notitia or Fiducia?

Jeff: I would go with Fiducia.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: Notitia is kind of mean. She can be abrasive.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: But here’s the thing. James talks about having a faith that’s not a saving faith. What is that faith? Well, a faith without a saving faith is a mind that knows and a will that assents but does not love. It continues to suppress those things in unrighteousness.

For instance the demons know. And to get them not to lie they assent. But they are not saved. Why? Because they don’t love the thing that they say is true, which is God’s truth. So saving faith has *fiducia* connected to it.

So when we talk about actions, actions come after this, right? Actions come as a result of knowing, assenting and trusting. And then so this is to be saved by faith alone. And this is to be saved by a faith that is never alone. These actions will always accompany this state.

“A Review - Romans 1-4”

Ron: We have to be careful. We each have our own particular sin, whether it be pornography or whatever sins; we have to work at them.

Jeff: We cut ourselves too much slack. For instance the drug addict who we work with, his sins are visible, right? We see them.

Ron: Yes.

Jeff: And we can make all kinds of evaluations. But nobody sees my sin, right? Which is why accountability partners are really helpful so that you can tell people, “Hey, keep praying for me because I’m really struggling right now,” that sort of thing, so that you can expose it, because the worst thing that you can do is be along with your sin. I mean, the worst thing that you can do is be alone with your sin, because your sin will always drive you into more secrecy. You’ll eventually live a double life if you’re not already. And that is a recipe for disaster.

So it’s not a problem that a person sins. It’s that a person sins and then hides the sin, secludes the sin, becomes isolated by the sin, and pretty soon is living two lives as a result of the sin. That’s a pattern that’s destructive.

But you’re right; you’re 100% right. We are far too easy with ourselves, because it’s the guy with the visible sin where we can always say, “Yeah, I’m not like him.” There’s a story like that, right? *(Laughter)* We think, Lord, thank You that I’m not like that man!, right? *(Laughter)*

So anyway, we are out of time. So we’ll start chapter 5 next time. *(Laughter)*

Don Maurer: Same outline?

Jeff: Yes, the same outline. You know, I want you guys to know just so you know: I am never disappointed anymore at the fact that you ruin my outlines. *(Laughter)* I am totally good with that. The way I look at it is that this is a meandering through the Scriptures, and we’ll do that together.

Ted: That’s a way of dealing with your pride.

Jeff: Yes, that’s right. *(Laughter)*

Ted: That’s a sin we don’t think is that great.

Jeff: That’s right.

Ted: Thank goodness I’m not a proud person. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Yeah. Hey, I want to put in a plug for Paideia. The Paideia reading group is meeting next month. We meet once a month in the spring. Gary is always there; Gary has been there since the beginning. We’re reading an ancient Patristic book. It really is a discussion; it’s not a lecture. And Gary, who are we reading? Is it Maximus the Confessor?

Gary Dunbar: Yes.

Jeff: This is the guy who is important for the development of our understanding of the *diotheletism*, two wills of Christ.

Don Maurer: Oh, wow!

Jeff: I know, right? It is exciting and good stuff to read. So if you’re interested in reading something like that with a group of men, please—

Don Maurer: It’s like “West Side Story.”

Transcriber’s Note: Don sings: Paideia! I’ve just met a girl named Paideia! *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Let me pray with you and then we’ll go. Father, thank You for this day and for the time You’ve given us to be together. You are certainly good, and we are thankful that You are. Our Father, we pray that today would be a blessing not just to us, but to the people with whom we have to deal. And we pray that You would bless those who have to deal with us. And we pray these things, asking them in Jesus’ precious and blessed name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.