

Dead & Alive – Romans, Part 3

The Apostle Paul has not yet been to Rome to meet the group of Christians he is writing to in this letter we call “Romans” ... and yet he knows THE answer that every one of them need. It’s the GOSPEL.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

This word translated “ashamed” can also mean “offended,” and it doesn’t take long for us to realize that the Gospel is an offensive message! In fact, Paul spends most of the first three chapters telling us how ANGRY God is with us over our sin. **In God’s eyes, we are spiritually DEAD.**

CHAPTER ONE: WE ARE “DEAD IN CARNALITY.”

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

CHAPTER TWO: WE ARE “DEAD IN HYPOCRISY.”

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

CHAPTER THREE: WE ARE “DEAD UNDER THE LAW.”

Romans 3:19-20 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that **every mouth may be stopped**, and **all the world may become guilty before God**. Therefore **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified** in his sight: **for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

God’s Law is not a checklist we KEEP; it is a benchmark we FAIL. The book of Romans begins with God’s ANGER and our FAILURE – because if you can’t see the problem, you won’t appreciate the solution. But here’s the turnaround from ANGER to GRACE ... **BUT NOW** (3:21)

Romans 3:21-24 **But now** the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the **righteousness** of God which is by **faith** of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is **no difference**: For **all have sinned**, and **come short** of the glory of God; Being **justified** freely by his **grace** through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus:

Paul now turns his attention to two important terms: FAITH & GRACE.

3:22 says “the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God which is by FAITH”
3:24 says “being JUSTIFIED freely by his GRACE”

RIGHTEOUSNESS and JUSTIFIED are the same word in this passage: DIKAIOSUNE. It means, “to be declared in right standing before God.” And Paul says that it happens by FAITH (ch. 4) and by GRACE (ch. 5).

CHAPTER FOUR: WE ARE “ALIVE THROUGH FAITH.”

In chapter 4, Paul calls ABRAHAM to the stand to support his argument:

- REJECTING the law results in UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (ch. 1)
- RELYING on the law results in SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (ch. 2)
- NEITHER of these gives us RIGHTEOUSNESS before God (ch. 3)

Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation, the epitome of the Jewish religion, a source of pride for the Jewish people (“Abraham is our father” – John 8:39). So the question of chapter four is, “Would Abraham agree with Paul, or not?”

Paul has just said, “Boasting is excluded” (3:27), and now he paints a picture of Abraham standing before God boasting of his righteousness. Did that happen? Absolutely not! It’s obvious that even Abraham could not “boast” before God – and neither can any of us!

Romans 4:2-3 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was **counted** unto him for righteousness.

Verse 3 introduces us to an extremely important word: **LOGIZDOMAI**. It is used 11 times in this chapter alone ... “counted” (v.3, 5), “reckoned” (v. 4, 9, 10), “imputeth” (v. 6), “impute” (v. 8), “imputed” (v. 11, 22, 23, 24)

LOGIZDOMAI is an accounting term, meaning “to count as” or “to credit.” To credit something is to confer a status that was not there before. To credit something is to put it on the account of an individual.

How did Abraham receive righteousness? Was it by relying on the Law? NO. Rather, Abraham had FAITH in God, and God CREDITED that faith to his “account” AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Abraham wasn’t perfect in his standing before God, but God looked at him AS THOUGH HE WAS!

A Christian is someone who stops doing BAD WORKS (sin). But a Christian is also someone who stops doing GOOD WORKS to GET saved, and instead does GOOD WORKS because they ARE saved!

King David joins Father Abraham as a witness to Paul's argument:

Romans 4:6-8 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God **imputeth** righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not **impute** sin.

My sin is no longer COUNTED AGAINST ME (v. 8) – instead, God's righteousness is now COUNTED FOR ME (v. 6)!

Does this only apply to Jews, or is this for Gentiles too? Paul's answer is that Abraham was credited with righteousness in Genesis 15:6, but he wasn't circumcised until Genesis 17:24. Father Abraham was "declared righteous" BEFORE he "became Jewish," so of course Gentiles can be declared righteous, even though they don't know the Law like the Jews. Abraham is "the father of ALL them that believe" (4:11).

So why did God bother with the Law at all? Because without the Law neither Jew nor Gentile would understand how angry God is about our sin, or how much our sin separates us from God.

Romans 4:15 Because the law worketh **wrath**: for where no law is, there is no **transgression**.

If I trespass on private property, I am guilty of trespassing regardless of whether I know I've done wrong or not. But if I see a sign saying "Private Property: Keep Out" and then I trespass, I am now a transgressor of the LAW. I knew the Law explicitly, and I still broke it. So the Law declares that I'm not just "accidentally" a sinner; I'm "intentionally" a sinner!

And that's why I need something MORE than merely trusting in my own righteousness – because I'm sinful no matter what, and because I'm powerless to change or to save myself. I need IMPUTED righteousness.

Romans 4:19-22 And being not weak in faith, he **considered not** his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He **staggered not** at the promise of God through unbelief; but was **strong in faith**, giving glory to God; And being **fully persuaded** that, **what he had promised, he was able also to perform**. And therefore it was **imputed** to him for righteousness.

Abraham shows us how SAVING FAITH acts:

- Saving faith is greater than human FEELINGS. ("staggered not")
- Saving faith is greater than human FACTS. ("considered not")
- Saving faith is based on God's WORD. ("fully persuaded")

We have to trust God the way Abraham trusted God!

CHAPTER FIVE: WE ARE "ALIVE THROUGH GRACE."

Romans 5:1 Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ:

PEACE WITH GOD means that the WAR between us and God is now over; hostilities have ended, and His WRATH has been appeased.

Remember how Paul said that we are "declared to be in right standing" before God by "faith" (4:4) AND "by grace" (4:5)? They work together!

Romans 5:2 By whom also we have **access by faith into this grace** wherein we stand, and **rejoice in hope** of the glory of God.

FAITH ("pistis") = "absolute TRUST," it is OUR action toward God
GRACE ("charis") = "undeserved FAVOR," it is GOD'S action toward us

GRACE goes beyond "peace with God." Not only have the hostilities ended between us and God, but now He has offered us relationship! And we also have been given a future HOPE that causes us to rejoice!

These three benefits of justification are the three tenses of our salvation:
PEACE – we are free from the sins in our PAST
GRACE – we have relationship with God in our PRESENT
HOPE – we will live forever in Heaven's glory in our FUTURE

Romans 5:3-5 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that **tribulation** worketh **patience**; And **patience, experience**; and **experience, hope**: And hope maketh **not ashamed**; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Because we have FAITH ("absolute trust") in God, and because we know we are living by His GRACE ("undeserved favor"), Christians can actually REJOICE in the sufferings that God allows us to face in this life.

- TRIBULATION ("suffering") leads to PATIENCE ("perseverance")
- PATIENCE ("perseverance") leads to EXPERIENCE ("character")
- EXPERIENCE ("character") leads to HOPE ("expectation")
- HOPE ("expectation") never leads to being ASHAMED ("disappointed")

Romans 5:8-10 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **Much more** then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we **were reconciled** to God by the **death** of his Son, much more, **being reconciled**, we shall be saved by his **life**.

If Jesus didn't give up on you when you were at WAR with Him, you don't have to worry about Him giving up on you now that you are at PEACE with Him! And if Jesus could save us from sin through His DEATH, how much more can He give us victory over sin through His LIFE?

The second half of Romans 5 compares the TWO ADAMS ...

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

This is a tragic chain reaction – SIN entered the world through Adam, DEATH entered the world through sin, and BOTH sin and death were then passed on to every member of the human race!

Paul is not just saying that we are all LIKE Adam. He is saying that we were all IN Adam. When HE sinned, so did WE. Adam was our “legal representative,” standing in our place through covenant relationship. This doesn't seem fair to the Western mind, because we didn't elect Adam to be our representative! But God created Adam precisely for that reason. We may not even like this system, but God designed it for redemption!

If the first sinful Adam's DISOBEDIENCE is our disobedience in God's sight, then if there were a perfect second Adam, his OBEDIENCE could also become our obedience in God's sight. That's why Jesus came!

Romans 5:15 But not as the **offence**, so also is the **free gift**. For if through the **offence** of one many be dead, **much more the grace** of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Adam was DISOBEDIENT – but Jesus was OBEDIENT
Adam BROKE the Law – but Jesus FULFILLED the Law
Adam brought OFFENCE – but Jesus brought GRACE
Adam brought BONDAGE – but Jesus brought FREEDOM
Adam brought DEATH – but Jesus brought LIFE
Adam brought CONDEMNATION – but Jesus brought JUSTIFICATION

BEFORE we are saved, all that is true of ADAM is true of us.
But AFTER we are saved, all that is true of JESUS is true of us!

MUCH MORE (5:15) – the power of GRACE is much greater than the power of SIN, and the power of Christ's work on the cross can utterly overwhelm, completely cover, and totally undo the effects of Adam's sin.

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But **where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:**