

NT Reading Plan 2020

Living Hope Fellowship
Romans 3-9

This week, you will be reading some densely packed portions of Scripture and they're not always easy to interpret so don't stress if you can't unpack it all...theologians have been attempting that for millennia! But Paul's main points are easy enough to see and should greatly encourage your soul. A basic understanding of Romans can be gleaned by paying attention to the following key terms contrasted with their opposites.

Righteousness / Unrighteousness

You can't understand Romans without looking at "righteousness." It's helpful at the outset to know that the righteousness words in this section are directly related to the just, justice, justification, justified words in this section. They have the same root word in Greek but it doesn't come across in English.

We don't have the word righteous-ified in English so translators use justified. Justification in Romans means God declares sinners to be righteous based on their faith in Christ who is righteous. Therefore believers, though they still sin, have a perfectly just (or righteous) standing before God.

God himself is the only one who is righteous (3:5, 21, 22, 26, contrast with 3:10). Therefore, God alone can give just verdicts and justify sinners (3:4, 26).

Righteousness/Justification comes to sinners through faith (3:22, 28, 30; 4:3, etc.), not through works (3:28; 4:2, etc.), as a gift of God's grace (3:24; 4:4; 5:15, 15, 17; 6:23), through Christ (3:22, 24; 5:1, etc.), by Christ's blood (3:25; 5:9), so believers are now to be instruments for righteousness (6:13).

1. How does knowing that righteousness and justification are part of the same word group help you read Romans 3:21-26 with new insight?

Justification / Condemnation

The opposite of justification (a legal declaration of a sinner's righteous standing before God) is a legal verdict of judgment: condemnation. God is just in condemning sinners for their unrighteousness (3:5-6).

2. How can God remain just and condemn some sinners as guilty while justifying other sinners, declaring them to be righteous? How can God be God and justify you? This is the crux of the Christian faith.

Faith / Works

Paul makes it clear that we are not saved by works nor by the law. Saved people have always been saved the same way: by faith.

3. Who does Paul refer to as two examples of faith in chapter 4? When did those two live in relation to the Law of Moses? Before, during, after?

Life / Death

One sin brought death into the world while one righteous life brought life to many (5:12-21).

4. Is this fair of God? Are you glad that God can impute the status of another to your account?

Spirit / Law or Flesh

In 7:7, Paul tells us about the new way to live which is in the Spirit, not according to the law. The eighth chapter is his greatest unfolding of how to live the Christian life under the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The opposite of a Spirit-led life is a life of the flesh, a life of misusing the law as a means of salvation (the law was good but could only condemn those who broke it).

5. How much is it possible to please God outside of the Spirit (in other words, in the flesh)?

Bonus: Romans is stocked with many **salvation concepts & terms**: justification (3:24, 26, 28, 30; 4:1, 5, 25; 5:1, 9, 16, 18; 8:30, 33), imputation (4:6, 8; 5:12-21), substitution (5:6, 8), redemption (3:24; 8:23), propitiation (3:25), sanctification (6:19, 22), salvation (5:9, 10; 8:24; 9:27), reconciliation (5:10), union with Christ (6:5, 6), adoption (8:15, 23), foreknowledge (8:29), predestination (8:29), calling (8:28, 30; 9:24, 26), glorification (8:17, 30), election (8:33; 9:11), regeneration (6:4, 11). This is an abbreviated list. You could find more!