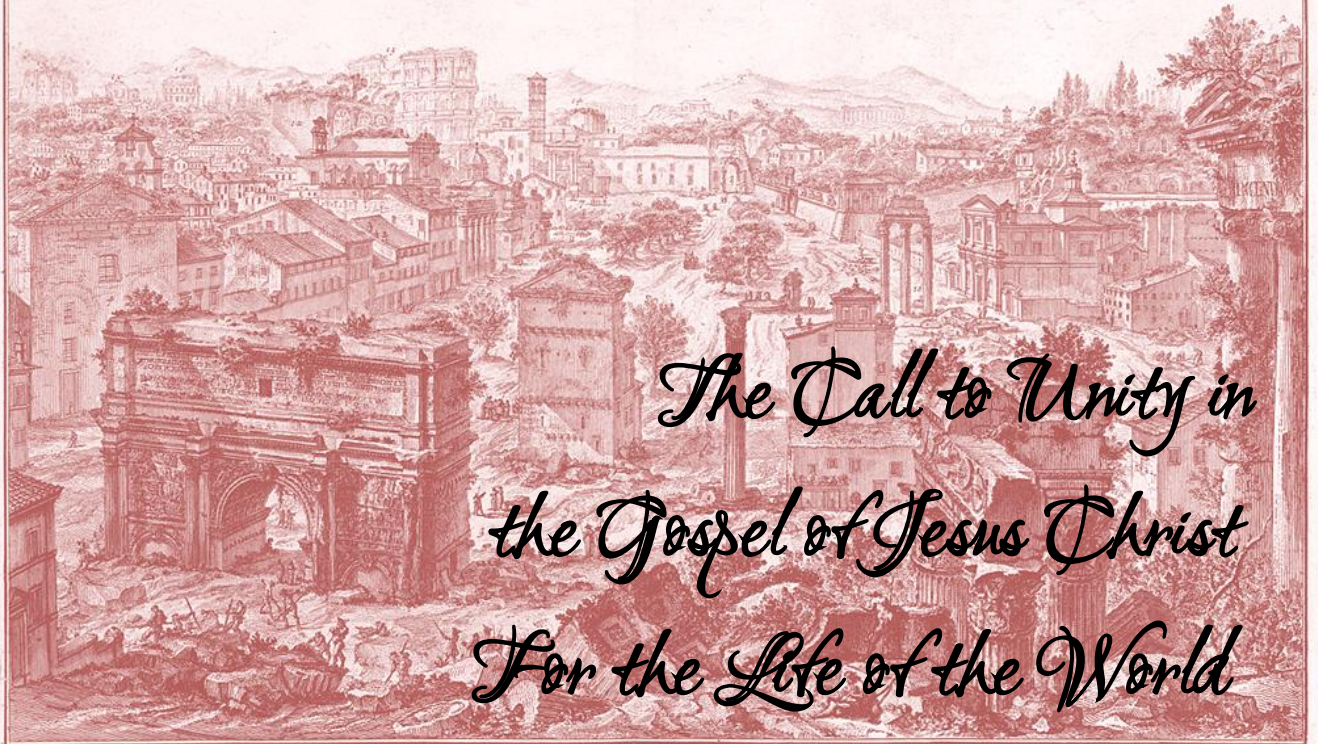


Paul's Letter to the Romans



*The Call to Unity in
the Gospel of Jesus Christ
For the Life of the World*

Veduta di Campo Vaccino
1. Vittoria del Tempio di Giove Tonante
2. Vittoria del Tempio della Concordia
3. Mura di Adriano e Mura di Aureliano
4. Basilica di Santa Maria in Ardeatina
5. Tempio di Antonino e Faustina
6. Tempio di Romolo e Remo, ora di S. Costanza
7. S. Maria in Montesanto
8. Foro di Traiano
9. Vestigio del Palazzo de' Vecchi nel Palatino
10. Colonna del Tempio di Giove Ottimo
11. Mura di Adriano
12. Mura di Aureliano
13. Vestigio della Basilica della Casa aurea di Nerone
14. Colosseo
15. Vestigio di due Vestiboli della detta Casa aurea
16. Vestigio della Basilica di Traiano
Giovanni Battista Piranesi del. Sculp.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Veduta di Campo Vaccino*, 1775



CHRISTCOMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

*The Call to Unity in
the Gospel of Jesus Christ
For the Life of the World*

Part 2: Romans 6-7

Introduction

Paul's Letter to the Romans is well known for its clear theological argument for salvation in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone. Martin Luther boldly declares:

This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy (themselves) 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, and the better it tastes.¹

From the foundation of this clear theological argument, Romans offers a pastoral plea for this theology to unify God's people in how they live for the life of the world.² We make a critical mistake when we divorce theology from its intended purpose to shape our lives into the image of Christ. Unfortunately, this particular mistake tore apart the diverse Roman church from the inside out. Paul stepped into this rift and lovingly sought to mend their painful divisions with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Just as Paul provided the healing balm of the Gospel of Jesus to the Romans, we too are offered this same cure to our divisions. As a helpful reminder of what we mean when we say the Gospel of Jesus, here's our working definition from our membership material:

The Gospel is the power of God for the total salvation of everyone who believes and the restoration of all things on a cosmic scale- as written in **Romans 8**. More fully, God the Creator has acted according to His will to deliver us, His created sons and daughters, from our sins and restore us to Him. He did this by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life on the cross for the sins of his people satisfying His wrath toward sin. Jesus

¹ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1976), xiii.

² Remember, the phrase "for the life of the world" comes from **John 6:50-51** in which Jesus declares the redemptive purpose for which He has come into the world: to grant eternal life to those who believe in Him as Savior (or the Bread of Life). We, the Church, continue God's mission in Christ as we offer Jesus as the bread of life to each other and to our neighbors. This phrase that we use often serves to remind us of our humbling calling as ambassadors of reconciliation in union with Christ.

was then raised from the dead to grant us newness of life in the resurrection, ascended to heaven where he continues to intercede for us, and will return again to make all things new and glorious. In summary, you are not being saved FROM God, but you are being saved TO God! He has pursued you in Christ so that you may dwell in and be blessed by His presence for all of eternity!

Praise God for His unchanging truth and the finished work of Jesus that sets us free from all that divides us for His glory and for the life of the world!

To begin our journey, let us consider the historical circumstances for Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul wrote this letter near the end of his third missionary journey around 57 A.D. At the time of writing, he was most likely in Corinth during his 3 month stay in Greece recorded in **Acts 20:2-3**.³ The Roman church was not planted by Paul nor had he yet visited them; however, he was planning to visit on his way to deliver aid to the suffering churches in Jerusalem.⁴ The most plausible explanation for the origin of the Roman church is that it was started by a group of Jews converted at Pentacost who returned to share their transformation in the Gospel of Jesus.⁵ The Lord abundantly blessed their efforts such that the Gentile converts quickly exceeded the number of Jewish Christians in the church. The Roman church served as a glorious picture of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant along with God's other promises concerning the redemption of Gentiles. In **Ephesians 3:6**, Paul marvels at this reality when he refers to it as, "this mystery (of Christ) is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."⁶

Unfortunately, this glorious witness to the power of the Gospel was soon marred by sinful divisions within the church. The seeds for these divisions were sown when Emperor Claudius scattered the Jewish Christians from Rome around 49 A.D.⁷ This opened the way for

³ D. A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament, 2nd Ed.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992, 2005), 394; Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977 based on the Revised Ed., 1886), 9, further confirmed Paul's location based on several notable Corinthians being mentioned throughout Romans.

⁴ Hodge, 7. Hodge states, "History, therefore, has left us ignorant of the time when the church was founded, and the persons by whom the work was effected.", 7.; cf. **Romans 15:25** concerning Paul's plan to visit.

⁵ Carson & Moo, 395; This possibility casts a more sorrowful shadow over the eventual division in the Roman church given the unifying purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentacost.

⁶ Paul alludes to this in his benediction to the letter in **Romans 16:25-27**.

⁷ cf. **Acts 18:1-2** for Biblical testimony to this event.

the converted Gentiles to step into church leadership. They interpreted this as evidence of God's particular favor on them as His newly chosen people.

This circumstance changed again as a result of political transition in Rome. The Jewish Christians were allowed to return in 54 A.D at the start of Emperor Nero's reign.⁸ Disagreement between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians erupted immediately over who had the legitimate right to rule the Roman church as God's chosen people. This revealed their underlying disunity in how they viewed themselves, each other, and, ultimately, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁹ John Stott describes their disunity as primarily rooted in their distorted theology:

Even the most casual reading of Romans betrays the fact that the church in Rome was a mixed community consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, with Gentiles in the majority (1:5f., 13; 11:13), and that there was considerable conflict between these groups. It is further recognized that this conflict was primarily not ethnic (different races and cultures), but theological (different convictions about the status of God's covenant and law, and so about salvation).¹⁰

Hodge grants further insight into this division: "The Jews insisted, to a greater or lesser extent, on their peculiar privileges and customs; and the Gentiles disregarded, and at times despised the scruples and prejudices of their weaker brethren."¹¹ A church that had once served as a beautiful picture of the unifying power of the Gospel was being deformed by sinful divisions born of unbiblical theology.

Paul addressed this crippling division by reminding both the Jews and Gentiles of the fundamental theological ways in which they were unified for God's glory and redemptive mission in the world. According to Romans, they were unified in the following ways in their:¹²

-absolute need for Jesus as a result of their radical sinfulness and inability to save themselves (**Chap. 1-3**)

⁸ Carson & Moo, 395-6.

⁹ Ibid., 407.

¹⁰ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Downer's Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 35, 34.

¹¹ Hodge, 7.

¹² There are a number of ways to break Romans into teachable units that remain true to Paul's teachings. It is beyond our scope to detail those here. However, most scholars agree to that Chap. 1-11 serve as the theological basis for the practical instructions given in Chap. 12-16. Our specific subdivision of those two main units can be found on **pages 9-10** of this devotional which are based on Paul's points of their unity listed above.

- justification (being relationally restored to God) in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone (**Chap. 4-5**)¹³
- sanctification (maturing further into the image of Christ) and glorification (completion of Christ's work in us) in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone in the Holy Spirit alone (**Chap. 6-8**)¹⁴
- formation into the undivided Church by God's predestined grace alone as opposed to any inherent quality within the two groups (**Chap. 9-11**)
- call to serve God's redemptive mission for the life of the world (**Chap 12-16**).

No earthly distinctions such as birthright or favorable (or unfavorable) circumstance should serve as a means of rending asunder what God had joined together in marital union in Christ. As Stott observes, "The most notable feature of these practical instructions is that Paul grounds them on his Christology, and in particular on the death, resurrection and parousia (second coming) of Jesus." He goes on to show how Paul's Christology formed their relationships with one another:

The weak are brothers and sisters for whom Christ died. Christ rose to be their Lord, and we have no right to interfere with his servants. He is also coming to be our judge; so we should not play the role of judge ourselves. We should also follow the example of Christ who did not please himself but became a servant – indeed a servant of both Jews and Gentiles. So, Paul leaves his readers with a beautiful vision of the weak and the strong, Jewish believers and Gentile believers, who are bound together by such a 'spirit of unity' that 'with one heart and mouth' they glorify God together (15:5-6).¹⁵

From the firm foundation of Jesus' Gospel and finished work, Paul calls for the Jewish and Gentile Christians to be reconciled in order to participate together in God's redemptive mission in the world.

In light of this, we must consider how destructive it was to the mission of the Roman church to have them fighting over who God loved more and had the right to claim control over the church. Satan's tactics proved masterful in getting them to turn on each other despite all their rich theology and redemptive experiences. We must also consider how destructive it is to the church's mission today for us to be fighting over who God loves more and has the right

¹³ Stott, 35. Stott makes the argument, as we will, that this theological declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ serves as the unifying truth for how then we should live together for God's glory and the life of the world.

¹⁴ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Finished Work of Christ: The Truth of Romans 1 – 8* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1998), 19. Schaeffer recognizes the shift from justification to sanctification in **Romans 6**.

¹⁵ Stott, 43.

to claim control over the church. Satan's tactics continue to prove masterful in getting us to turn on each other despite all our rich theology and redemptive experiences. More glorious ought be Jesus' Gospel that sets us free from the bondage of division. How wonderful the grace of God to provide us (as He did the Roman church) with Paul's letter that re-weds theology to its formative outworking in our lives for the life of the world! As John Stott simply but powerfully declares, "Only loyalty to the gospel can secure unity in the church."¹⁶

Given the importance of Romans for our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how it unifies us as God's people for the life of the world, we will take two years to slowly navigate the rich contents of Paul's letter.¹⁷ Our hope is that the pace will afford us opportunities to:

1. bear the fruits of repentance of our divisions unto reconciliation in Christ
2. mature in our faith in Christ alone by God's grace alone displayed for the life of the world.

Luther captures this hope beautifully:

Faith is living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a (person) would stake (their) life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God's grace and knowledge of it makes (all) glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures; and this is the work of the Holy (Spirit) in faith. Hence a (person) is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace; and thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light fires.¹⁸

Join us in praying that Paul's hope for the Roman church in **15:5-7** would be true in us as we grow in our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

To this we as God's people cry out, "Amen! May it be so, Lord, for Your glory!"

¹⁶ Stott, 25.

¹⁷ We will have a handful of Sundays throughout for one-off sermons and guest speakers as well as pause for Advent and Easter to focus specifically on the first coming of Jesus and His death, resurrection, and ascension.

¹⁸ Luther, xvii.

Through our weekly liturgy, we will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments. The calls to worship will come from **the Psalms** that celebrate God's call for us to rejoice in His sovereign faithfulness to mature us further into His image. We will respond together each week by reciting the foundational theological truths from **Romans** that unify us as God's beloved children. The assurances of pardon will come from key reminders in **Romans** of our sure salvation in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone. We will respond with a prayer of thanksgiving from **Romans 8:38-39** to remind us of the eternal surety of God's love for us in the finished work of Jesus. Each week, our benedictory blessings will come from **Romans 5:1-5** to send us out reminded of our blessed freedom from condemnation and the gift of peace with God in Christ. The goal of these various elements is to form us further into the image of Christ as seek to serve as ambassadors of His reconciliation.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray for the various missionaries, church plants, and missional ministries that we support at CCC as well as local churches including our own. We also have the opportunity to pray on Saturday for the Holy Spirit to draw people to and prepare us for worship. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to help us live out the truths presented in the worship service. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek for the Church to grow in the joy of salvation and unity in Christ for the sake of its mission in the world!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Structure of Paul's Letter to the Romans

Introduction:

- 1:1-7: *Paul's Greeting to the Church in Rome*
- 1:8-15: *Paul's Gratitude for All of God's People in the Church in Rome*
- 1:16-17: *Paul's Firm Foundation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ*

The Call to Unity in the Need for Jesus as Savior:

- 1:18-32: *The Gentiles' Need for Jesus*
- 2:1-11: *The Jew's Need for Jesus*
- 2:12-3:20: *The Universal Need for Jesus*
- 3:21-30: *The Righteousness of God for All Who Believe in Jesus*

The Call to Unity in Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone:

- 4:1-25: *Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone: Abraham's Example*
- 5:1-21: *Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone: Jesus' Finished Work*

The Call to Unity in Sanctification and Glorification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone in the Holy Spirit Alone:

- 6:1-21: *Sanctification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone: Resurrected Newness of Life*
- 7:1-25: *Sanctification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone: The Weakness of the Flesh and the Law*
- 8:1-39: *Sanctification and Glorification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone by God's Grace Alone: The Power of Life in the Holy Spirit*

The Call to Unity in God's Gracious Mission to Form the Church:

- 9:1-33: *God's Predestined Grace and the Weakness of Jews*
- 10:1-21: *God's Predestined Mission to the Jews*
- 11:1-36: *God's Predestined Mission to the Gentiles*

The Call to Unity in the Mission of the Church for the Life of the World:

- 12:1-33: *The Call for All to Present Themselves as Living Sacrifices for the Life of the World*
- 13:1-14: *The Call for All to Limit Distractions from Outside the Church for the Life of the World*
- 14:1-15:33: *The Call for All to Limit Distractions from Inside the Church for the Life of the World*
- 16:1-23: *Paul's Closing Commendations*
- 16:25-27: *Paul's Benediction*

Sermon Schedule

Part 2: Romans 6-7

Date	Call to Worship	Assurance of Pardon	Benediction	Sacrament
<i>Sunday, 1/2:</i> Romans 6:1-4	<i>Psalm 86:1-11</i>	Romans 6:20-23	Romans 8:1-4	<i>Bread and Cup</i>
<i>Sunday, 1/9:</i> Romans 6:5-11	<i>Psalm 116:1-9</i>	Romans 6:20-23	Romans 8:1-4	
<i>Sunday, 1/16:</i> Romans 6:12-14	<i>Psalm 37:1-7</i>	Romans 6:20-23	Romans 8:1-4	<i>Bread and Cup</i>
<i>Sunday, 1/23:</i> Romans 6:15-19	<i>Psalm 65:1-8</i>	Romans 6:20-23	Romans 8:1-4	
<i>Sunday, 1/30:</i> Romans 6:20-23	<i>Psalm 23</i>	Romans 6:20-23	Romans 8:1-4	
<i>Sunday, 2/6:</i> Romans 7:1-6	<i>Psalm 106:1-5</i>	Romans 7:4-6	Romans 8:1-4	<i>Bread and Cup</i>
<i>Sunday, 2/13:</i> Romans 7:7-12	<i>Psalm 119:17-24</i>	Romans 7:4-6	Romans 8:1-4	
<i>Sunday, 2/20:</i> Romans 7:13-20	<i>Psalm 119:25-32</i>	Romans 7:4-6	Romans 8:1-4	
<i>Sunday, 2/27:</i> Romans 7:21-25	<i>Psalm 119:33-40</i>	Romans 7:4-6	Romans 8:1-4	<i>Bread and Cup</i>

Weekly Congregational Response to God's Call to Worship

Abba Father,

As You are present with us in worship, remind us of these things through Your Word:

- Our unity in being sinful and separated from You without Christ.
- Our unity in possessing nothing deserving of salvation apart from Your gracious love.
- Our unity in justification in Christ alone by faith through Your grace alone.
- Our unity in sanctification in Christ alone by faith alone through Your grace alone in the power of the Holy Spirit alone.
- Our unity in our calling to serve and love one another without partiality.
- Our unity in Your redemptive mission in Christ for the life of the world.
- Our unity in glorification when all things will be made new at the return of Jesus when we will all dwell together with You in joy for eternity.

Amen and Amen.

Romans 6:1-4

The Week of January 2nd

Monday, 12/27: *Psalm 86:1-11*: What has God been teaching you recently about how to fear Him and walk in His truth?

Tuesday, 12/28: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to remind us of all that truly unites us which is stronger than what can divide us.

Wednesday, 12/29: *Romans 6:20-23*: Give thanks to God that you are no longer a slave to sin by His grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Thursday, 12/30: *Romans 6:1-4*: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you improve upon your baptism and mature in laying your sin to rest and walking in newness of resurrected life.

Friday, 12/31: *Romans 8:1-4*: How has it been a blessing for you to no longer suffer condemnation because of your union with Christ?

Saturday, 1/1: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Supper. Give thanks for God's abounding grace in the person and work of Christ.

Sunday, 1/2: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup*: Pray for the means of grace to help us mortify our sin and vivify our resurrected lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:5-11

The Week of January 9th

Monday, 1/3: *Psalm 116:1-9*: Reflect on the times that the Lord has heard your pleas for mercy. How has this affected your love of and trust in Him?

Tuesday, 1/4: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you see our unity in being sinful without qualification, which means we are all separated from God apart from Christ

Wednesday, 1/5: *Romans 6:20-23*: Give thanks to God who makes it possible for you to grow and change in Christ.

Thursday, 1/6: *Romans 6:5-11*: How are you growing in being dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus?

Friday, 1/7: *Romans 8:1-4*: Reflect on how you have been blessed by being set free from the law of sin and death so as to be free in Christ Jesus through the law of the Spirit.

Saturday, 1/8: Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw people to worship who need to be set free from the power of sin and death to walk in resurrected newness of life in Jesus.

Sunday, 1/9: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the means of grace to help us grow in living resurrected lives in union with Christ.

Romans 6:12-14

The Week of January 16th

Monday, 1/10: *Psalm 37:1-7*: Where are you struggling to commit your way to the Lord? How is it affecting your trust in and patience with Him?

Tuesday, 1/11: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you see our unity in possessing nothing deserving of salvation apart from God's gracious love displayed in Christ.

Wednesday, 1/12: *Romans 6:20-23*: How have you recently matured as a result of your assurance of your pardon in Christ?

Thursday, 1/13: *Romans 6:12-14*: In what ways are you presenting yourself in mind, body, and soul to God as an instrument for His righteousness? What holds you back from doing this?

Friday, 1/14: *Romans 8:1-4*: Give thanks for God's glorious grace in redeeming you from your failures in the flesh and of the weakness of the law to save.

Saturday, 1/15: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Supper. Pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen your ability to mortify sin and vivify your ability to serve as an instrument of righteousness for the Lord's glory.

Sunday, 1/16: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup*: Pray for the means of grace to help us be ever more victorious over the sins that seek to dominate and destroy us.

Romans 6:15-19

The Week of January 23rd

Monday, 1/17: *Psalm 65:1-8*: Meditate on the ways that you have benefitted from the Lord bringing you near to Him in Christ. Share this with someone this week.

Tuesday, 1/18: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you see our unity in justification in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone.

Wednesday, 1/19: *Romans 6:20-23*: How should your assurance of eternal life in Christ affect your life day to day?

Thursday, 1/20: *Romans 6:15-19*: How have you struggled with your new found freedom in Christ as a result of the grace of God? Does it matter how you live now that you are in union with Christ?

Friday, 1/21: *Romans 8:1-4*: Give thanks for God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in you.

Saturday, 1/22: Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw those who are currently enslaved to sin to worship so as to potentially be set free in the redeeming power of Christ.

Sunday, 1/23: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the means of grace to help us respond to God's grace with grateful obedience.

Romans 6:20-23

The Week of January 30th

Monday, 1/24: *Psalm 23*: Pray this Psalm, and give thanks for Lord serving as your Shepherd to lead you to Him and life everlasting.

Tuesday, 1/25: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you experience our unity in sanctification in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone in the power of the Holy Spirit alone.

Wednesday, 1/26: *Romans 6:20-23*: Praise God for the surety of the finished work of Christ on your behalf.

Thursday, 1/27: *Romans 6:20-23*: In what ways have you been specifically set free from sin? In what ways are you specifically maturing in likeness to Christ?

Friday, 1/28: *Romans 8:1-4*: What blessings have you received from walking not according to the flesh but to the Spirit?

Saturday, 1/29: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help those who are gathered bear the fruit that leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Sunday, 1/30: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the means of grace to grow us in gratitude for all that God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit have done and are doing for us.

Romans 7:1-6

The Week of February 6th

Monday, 1/31: *Psalm 106:1-5*: What is the Lord doing among His people (or in the Church) that you find encouraging?

Tuesday, 2/1: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you grow in our unity in being called to serve and love one another without partiality.

Wednesday, 2/2: *Romans 7:4-6*: Give thanks for the assurance that comes from being wed to Christ who will never leave or forsake you.

Thursday, 2/3: *Romans 7:1-6*: What of God's law are we released from through union with Jesus?

Friday, 2/4: *Romans 8:1-4*: What blessings do you receive from Jesus fulfilling the righteous requirement of the law on our behalf?

Saturday, 2/5: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Supper. Give thanks for God's grace in freeing you from the requirements of His law in Christ.

Sunday, 2/6: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup*: Pray for the means of grace to guide us in using our freedom in Christ for God's glory and for the life of the world.

Romans 7:7-12

The Week of February 13th

Monday, 2/7: *Psalm 119:17-24*: How is God's law relational?

Tuesday, 2/8: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you be a part of our unity in God's redemptive mission in Christ for the life of the world.

Wednesday, 2/9: *Romans 7:4-6*: How does Christ's resurrection and its application in your life help you be assured of your pardon in Christ?

Thursday, 2/10: *Romans 7:7-12*: Is God's law bad or corrupt? What role is it to play if it doesn't bring life?

Friday, 2/11: *Romans 8:1-4*: Give praise to God that your weaknesses don't dictate His love for you.

Saturday, 2/12: Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw those who need to have their sin exposed by God's law so as to be redeemed by God's love through Jesus Christ.

Sunday, 2/13: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the Holy Spirit to use the means of grace to help us understand how God's law is holy, righteous, and good even though it cannot save us.

Romans 7:13-20¹⁹

The Week of February 20th

Monday, 2/14: *Psalm 119:25-32*: What are some ways in which God has given you life through His word?

Tuesday, 2/15: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you hope in our unity in glorification when all things will be made new at the return of Jesus when we will dwell together with God in joy for eternity.

Wednesday, 2/16: *Romans 7:4-6*: Meditate on the fruit that you have been bearing for God recently. How does this affect your confidence in who and Whose you are?

Thursday, 2/17: *Romans 7:13-20*: Do you have the ability to be perfect apart from Christ? What serves to keep you from being able to be perfect?

Friday, 2/18: *Romans 8:1-4*: What blessings have you received from walking according to the Spirit?

Saturday, 2/19: Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw people who are caught in the cycle of knowing what they need to be doing but are currently unable to live that out for the glory of God, because they aren't in union with Christ.

Sunday, 2/20: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the means of grace to remind us that we are not trapped in the endless cycle of not being able to do what we know we ought to do for the glory of God.

¹⁹ Please read the Excursus on p. 23-4 on the identity of the struggling one in Romans 7:13-25.

Romans 7:21-25

The Week of February 27th

Monday, 2/21: *Psalm 119:33-40*: What are some ways in which the Lord is teaching you how to love Him and to love your neighbors in your spheres of influence?

Tuesday, 2/22: Read the Weekly Congregational Response to the Call to Worship on page 13. Pray for the Holy Spirit to unify our church in the truths of the Gospel for God's glory, our joy, and as a witness to the world who will know who we are by the love we have for one another.

Wednesday, 2/23: *Romans 7:4-6*: What are some things that you are no longer struggling with or are struggling less with that help assure you of your pardon in Christ?

Thursday, 2/24: *Romans 7:21-25*: Give thanks to God for delivering you from this body of death through Jesus Christ our Lord! Share this with someone this week.

Friday, 2/25: *Romans 8:1-4*: What are some ways in which you would like to grow in walking according to the Spirit?

Saturday, 2/26: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Supper. Give praise to God for His redeeming grace.

Sunday, 2/27: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup*: Pray for the means of grace to help us live lives that are pleasing to Him.

Excursus on the Identity of

The Struggling One in Romans 7:13-25

The identity of the struggling one in **Romans 7:13-25** has been a subject of debate for centuries. Theologians traditionally fall into either the camp of those who think Paul is referring to himself in his struggles as saint who's still a sinner or the camp that sees this person as a God fearing seeker who's struggling to keep the law only to discover that they can't. The evidence for each position has led some theologians to throw up their hands unable to decide which serves as the identity of the struggling one. Given the gravity and nuance of the debate, the goal of this excursus is not to seek to solve that debate, but to instead give us some banks of the river to be able to apply the passage in the greater context of Romans.

Let's begin with what Paul is NOT saying in **Romans 7:13-25**. Based on his previous extensive declaration of our freedom from the slavery of sin through Christ in **Romans 6**, Paul CANNOT be declaring the futility of our obedience to God's commands. Too many Christians try to point to this passage to say, "See, I can't help it. That which I want to do that's good, I just can't seem to do leaving me to repeatedly do what's wrong." This interpretation also doesn't fit with what Paul proclaims in **Romans 8**. In union with Christ, we have the ability to be pleasing to the Lord by walking in the Holy Spirit who indwells us. If we declare ourselves helpless to the power of sin and disobedience, then we're declaring the resurrection of Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit are powerless and meaningless. In context, this is clearly NOT what Paul is saying.

Let's look at what Paul is ultimately emphasizing so that we can apply his emphasis to our lives. Prior to **Romans 7:13-25**, Paul discusses in **Romans 7:1-12** the purpose of the law to expose the depths of our sin and its deadly cost to us. He makes it clear that the law isn't the problem, for it is holy, righteous, and good. The problem is the sin that separates us from God that we're largely unaware of without the law. From this, we can say with authority that anyone who seeks to be saved by their keeping of the law will fail (which has been a ringing bell throughout Romans). Given Paul's further discussion of walking according to the flesh or according to the Spirit in **Romans 8:1-11**, we can also conclude that Christians that seek to further earn or increase God's love for them through their law keeping will also fail. Thus, Paul's offered solution to the problem of the law is to live according to the indwelling of the Spirit in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone.

More important than the identity of the struggling one in **Romans 7:13-25** is our identity in Christ as evidenced by life in the Spirit. May we not make excuses for our failures to be obedient, but instead, be those who are swift to run to God's throne to receive what we need in a time of trouble. May we walk in resurrected newness of life in the Spirit in union with Christ for our joy, the glory of God, and for the life of the world!