

KINGDOM.

LESSON 18

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> PSALM 10, 11, 14 and 15
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Take turns and **share** (or **read** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Psalm 10, 11, 14 and 15). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) <i>[THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH]</i> REVIEW SERIES J
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Review two by two the series J. "The Christian Church".

- (1) The nature of the Church. 1 Peter 2:5. You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- (2) The activities in the Church. Acts 2:42. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- (3) The ministries of the Church. Ephesians 4:12-13. to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
- (4) The tasks of Church leaders. Acts 20:28. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.
- (5) The glory in the Church. Ephesians 3:20-21. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) <i>[THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS]</i> ROMANS 5:1-11
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Introduce. Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study Romans 5:1-11 together.

In Romans 3:19-20, Paul concludes his teaching that no Gentile or Jew is righteous in God's eyes and that everyone stands condemned (doomed) (cf. John 3:18,36) before God. He also concludes that keeping the law cannot attain righteousness. In Romans 3:21-31, Paul teaches how righteousness can be attained.

Romans chapters 1:1 to 3:20 proved that both the Gentiles and the Jews *need God's righteousness*. Romans chapter 3:21-4:25 revealed *the way to God's righteousness*. In Romans 3, the sacrificial death of Christ is *the ground or bases of God's righteousness*. And in Romans 4, the example of Abraham shows that faith is *the means of receiving God's righteousness*.

Romans chapters 5 to 8 reveal *the effectiveness and fruitfulness of God's righteousness*. Romans 5:1-11 reveals that *the blessing of God's righteousness* is that Christians experience peace and grace that leads to a life of hope and love.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
Read. LET US READ Romans 5:1-11 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
Consider. WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? Record. Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

5:1-2

Discovery 1. Two consequences of justification by faith.

(1) The first consequence of justification by faith is from Romans 5:1-2.

We have the assurance of peace with God.

According to verse 1, we have a new relationship or status with God, which is expressed as having “peace with God”. God made peace with us by justifying us on the ground of the sacrificial death of Christ.

And we make peace with God by receiving his gracious righteousness through the means of faith.

Thus, our peace with God is based on the fact that God made peace with us through Jesus Christ! We experience this peace with God as a deep assurance of three things:

- all our sins of *the past* have been completely forgiven (Romans 5:1-2)
- all evils in *the present* are being overruled for our good (Romans 8:28)
- and all *future* events cannot bring about our separation from God’s love for us (Romans 8:38-39)!

According to verse 1-2, we stand immovably in this relationship or state of righteousness by grace and in an everlasting relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This state or condition implies that we may continually and with confidence enter into the presence of God.

(2) The second consequence of justification by faith is from Romans 5:2.

We have the assurance that future expectations will become realities.

“Hope” is the certainty that future promised expectations will become present realities. The things we expect to become realities is summarised by God’s “glory” and consists of the following three things. In the future Christians will:

- see Christ face to face and their human spirit (personality) will be completely conformed to the glorious image of Christ (1 John 3:1-3).
- be resurrected from the dead and their lowly bodies will be transformed so that they will be like the glorious resurrected body of Christ (Philippians 3:20)
- live on the new earth is a creation that is completely liberated from its bondage to decay (Romans 8:21).

Because Christians have been justified by faith, they have the assurance that they will share in God’s future glory. Although in their actual daily lives in the present they fall short of this ideal, the assurance of their hope (expectation) is not presumption, but a privilege. That is why Christians “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God”

5:3-11

Discovery 2. Two more consequences of justification by faith.

(3) The third consequence of justification by faith is from Romans 5:5.

We have the assurance that God through his Spirit lives in our body and that he loves us.

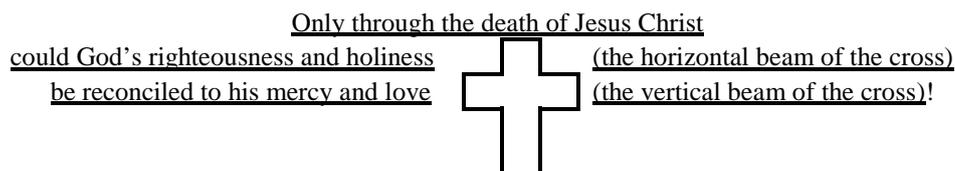
Although we experience temptations, pressures (hardships) and persecutions, these sufferings directly contribute to the forming of Christian character and the establishment of Christian hope. According to James 2:2-4, Hebrews 12:5-11 and 1 Peter 4:12-16, our sufferings also produce Christian maturity, holiness, fruitfulness and the certainty that we are God’s sons and that we will share in Christ’s glory.

Although our responsibility is to persevere in difficult times because we love God, the fact that we can and will persevere is the proof that God loves us! Through his Holy Spirit, God abundantly and continually pours out his love for us in our hearts and fills us with a consciousness that we are the objects of his love. God’s love for us gives us more and more hope that finally we will share in all God’s glory. This causes our hope in (expectation from) God to become as irreversible as God’s love for us!

(4) The fourth consequence of justification by faith is from Romans 5:6-11.

We have the assurance of our ultimate complete salvation.

While people on earth might expect somebody to die for righteous and good people (Romans 5:7), Jesus Christ did what no-one expected: he died for unrighteous and wicked people! God’s love constrained him to give Jesus Christ as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins (Romans 5:8).



If by Christ’s death, we have been reconciled to God,
then we will certainly be saved from God’s wrath in the final judgement day
by Christ’s resurrection.
(Romans 5:9-10).

If God has given the lesser benefit, that is, our complete *justification and reconciliation*, then he will certainly not withhold the greater benefit, that is, our complete *sanctification and glorification*! That is why Christians rejoice in God through Christ and rejoice in the salvation that has already begun here on earth and will one day be completed in heaven (Romans 5:11; cf. Philippians 1:6)!

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 5:1-11 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

5:1-2

Question 1. How do people get peace with God?

Notes. A person, who relies on his own good works or religious works (by keeping the law) in order to be justified by God, can never have peace with God, or experience peace in his heart. All his good works and religious works cannot remove God's wrath against his sins, nor remove his apprehension of God's punishment.

Peace with God can only be attained when God himself justifies us on the ground of the righteousness of Jesus Christ which he gained by his sacrificial death and resurrection. It is not we who make peace with God by keeping the law, but God who makes peace with us by the atoning sacrifice of Christ! Only after God has made peace with us, can we make peace with God and really experience peace! Only after God has reconciled himself to us, can we reconcile ourselves to God! Only after God has changed his relationship to us, can we change our relationship to God! Our peace with God begins with God making peace with us.

5:3-5

Question 2. Why can Christians rejoice in their sufferings?

Notes. Romans 5:3 says, "We also rejoice in our sufferings." Our sufferings consist of the ordinary sufferings of people in a fallen and broken world. Christians also share in these ordinary sufferings, like sickness, weakness, disability, troubles, setbacks, disappointments, and disasters like epidemics, earthquakes, floods, droughts and famines. But Christians must also suffer the special sufferings caused by the persecutions against Christians in the world.

But wouldn't all these sufferings cause Christians to be sad? How can Paul say that Christians rejoice in sufferings? The answer is as follows: All things happening on earth serve God's purpose! Even human suffering serves God's purpose. Before we became Christians, we regarded sufferings only as expressions of God's displeasure with us. However, when our relationship to God is changed, our relationship to people, things and events are also changed! After we become Christians, we begin to realise that sufferings are also manifestations of God's love for us! Christians consider it an honour to suffer for Christ, because when Christians share in the sufferings of Christ, they will also share in the glory of Christ (Matthew 5:4-12, Romans 8:17; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 4:13-14). Jesus Christ considers the sufferings of Christians as sufferings inflicted on himself!

Christians also rejoice *amidst* their sufferings. Their sufferings become occasions for God to manifest his power in their support and deliverance. The problems of Christians become possibilities for God! The Christian's own weakness serves to magnify God's power (2 Corinthians 12:9)! Precisely when Christians realise that they are weak but God is strong and ready to help, they ask God to help. Because God's help is sufficient, the faith of Christians is strengthened. Because their faith becomes stronger, Christians want to persevere and they can and will persevere. Christians realise that sufferings are God's means to build character, make them useful in this world and prepare them for the new world to come. Therefore, suffering should never surprise or baffle Christians, because suffering is completely consistent with being a child of God. To be sad amidst suffering is not inconsistent with being a Christian. But Christians may and can rejoice in their sufferings.

5:6-8

Question 3. How does God demonstrate his love for us?

Notes. Romans 5:6-10 says that God demonstrates his love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(1) God's nature is love.

It is not true that the God who revealed himself during the Old Testament period was "a God of war and vengeance", while the God who revealed himself during the New Testament period "is a God of love". Both the Old and New Testaments clearly teach that God is both a holy God, who hates sin, and a loving God, who seeks to save sinners.

For example, God says, "I loved you with an everlasting love and I have drawn you with loving kindness" (Jeremiah 31:3).

And "God is love. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:8,10).

See "war"¹ in the Bible.

(2) God demonstrates his love for us through Christ's death on the cross.

The death of Christ on the cross does not prove that God is love, but shows what God's love is. God's love for lost people constrained him to do the only possible thing that would save lost people without setting aside God's demand for justice! It is not sufficient when God forgives sins without punishing sins. A loving god who leaves sins unpunished is an unholy and unrighteous god! The God of the Bible is a loving and merciful God and at the same time a holy and righteous God!

Therefore, in order to reconcile his holiness and righteousness (the horizontal beam of the cross) with his love and mercy (the vertical beam of the cross), God took on the human nature in Jesus Christ, lived a perfect holy and righteous life on earth and died in the place of sinful people who believe in him! Jesus Christ did not merely die as an example for believers, also not as a martyr, but as the substitute for believers! Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice of atonement for people who believe in him.

- God made atonement for the sins of the sinner (Christ's death satisfied the righteous demand of God, appeased his holy and righteous anger against sin and took sins away). God made peace with the sinner.
- God reconciled the sinner that was separate from God with God again. The sinner makes peace with God.

(3) God demonstrates his love for us by continually applying Christ's completed work of salvation in the lives of weak and unworthy people.

Paul says that the death of Jesus Christ is the highest possible or highest conceivable evidence of God's love for unworthy people. Verse 6 says, "While we were still powerless (weak), Christ died for the ungodly". Our weakness is that we lack the strength to do what is spiritually and morally good in God's eyes. By nature, we cannot keep God's law, we cannot do God's will and we cannot really do good works. Our weakness is caused by our sin and consists of a total inability to rescue ourselves from the effects of the fall of mankind into sin. Our weakness is that we cannot save ourselves from God's condemnation (doom), from the spiritual and moral depravity in the world and from suffering and death. Ordinary people could imagine that God should love good, righteous, pure and godly people. But no one can imagine that the holy and righteous God should love unholy and ungodly people and give his only Son to redeem them! The fact that the God of the Bible did this is the greatest wonder!

If God loved us because we loved him, then he would love us only as long as we love him and on that condition! Then our salvation would depend on the constancy of our treacherous hearts. However, because God loved us first and loved us as *ungodly and unrighteous* people, as his *enemies*, and because Jesus Christ died for ungodly and unrighteous people, for God's enemies (Romans 5:6,8,10), our salvation does not depend on our love for God, but only on the constancy of God's love for us (cf. 1 John 4:10)!

Among people, a person would hardly die for a *righteous* person, that is, for a person who always kept the law. He might die for a *good* person, that is, a person who shows love and kindness to him (Romans 5:7). But Jesus Christ did the completely unexpected: he died for *unrighteous and wicked* people! The death of Christ on the cross was a manifestation of God's love without any human example in history! In Romans 5:6-8, Paul extols the greatness of God's love.

5:9-11

Question 4. What is the difference between "justification", "reconciliation" and "salvation"?

Notes.

¹ War in the historical descriptions in the Bible. God used Israel in war to destroy the godless Canaanite nations (Deuteronomy 7:1-10). He used the Assyrian nation to destroy the godless nation of Israel (Isaiah 8:6-9; 2 Kings 17:6-23) and the Babylonian nation to carry the godless nation of Judah into exile (2 Chronicles 36:14-21). He also used the Babylonian nation to defeat the godless Assyrian nation in war (Isaiah 10:5,15,33). He used the Persian nation to defeat the godless Babylonian nation in war (Isaiah 13:3-11,17-22; Daniel 5:22-30). And he used the Greek nation to defeat the godless Persian nation in war (Daniel 8:20-21).

War in the doctrinal parts of the Bible. All wars (inclusive "holy wars") are condemned. From his first coming Jesus Christ condemned all wars. He said, "All who draw the sword, will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). The kingdom of God is not of this world. If it were, then the Christians would have fought in wars" (John 18:36). All wars and conflicts in the world come from the desires (greed and the lust for power) of people. But this friendship with the world of wars is enmity with the God of the Bible (James 4:1-4).

War in the apocalyptic prophecy of the Bible. The anti-Christian world continues to fight wars especially against Christians (Revelation 12:17). Finally, the last antichrist will assemble all non-Christians for the last war in human history (Revelation 11:7; 13:7; 16:14,16; 17:14; 19:11,19; 20:8-9).

(1) "Justification" expresses the change of the state (position).

Justification is a legal or judicial expression and means that God has *declared* a sinner completely righteous with respect to his law, because the injustice has been paid. God *regards and treats* him from now on as a righteous person (not guilty anymore, forgiven), now on this earth and also later at the last judgment (cf. John 5:24).

Justification includes the following.

- Paying the debt and redeeming the debtor by means of a sacrifice of atonement (expiation)
- Satisfying God's righteous demand, appeasing his holy and righteous anger (indignation) against sin (injustice)
- Forgiving all sins of the believer
- Reconciling the sinner with God, restoring him to God's favour and complete acceptance
- Guaranteeing that blessings as sanctification and glorification would certainly follow (Romans 8:29-30).

Romans 5:9 says that "we have been justified by the blood of Jesus Christ." This expression in the Bible always means "through the sacrifice of atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross".

The Bible teaches clearly that the ground, reason or basis of our justification is:

- not the work, faith, or obedience of man
- not even the work of Christ in us
- but the work of Christ for us, in the place of believers (cf. Romans 3:25; Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 9:12).

(2) "Reconciliation" expresses a change of relationship.

"Reconciliation" means that two parties, who were formerly enemies, have made peace with one another. The Bible speaks of three kinds of reconciliation:

- Romans 5:9-11 speaks of the reconciliation of God to sinners. Due to our sins, the completely holy and righteous God is separated from us (Isaiah 59:1-2). He is like an enemy to us, who must and will punish our sins (otherwise he would not be holy or righteous)! But due to Christ's sacrifice of atonement, his holy and righteous anger against our sins has been propitiated and his enmity against us (our unholiness and unrighteousness) has been removed. Therefore, God is no longer separated from us!
- Romans 5:1 speaks of the reconciliation of sinners to God, that is, the believers experience peace with God. Due to the fact that they believe in Christ's sacrifice of atonement, God justified them and they experience peace with God. They realise that the holy and righteous God must hate sins, but no longer experience his anger against them. Therefore, we are no longer separated from God!
- Matthew 5:23-24 speaks of the reconciliation of brothers in churches with one another. And Ephesians 2:14-16 speaks of reconciliation of people belonging to various nationalities with one another. Because God has changed his relationship to Christians, Christians are able to change their relationship to God, to their brothers in the Church, to people of other nationalities and even to their enemies. Therefore, Christians from different nationalities are no longer separated from each other!

(3) "Salvation" expresses an ongoing process of change.

Salvation *begins* with:

- justification (the deliverance from *the guilt* of sin)
- and with reconciliation (the deliverance from *the shame* of sin)
- that leads to rebirth (the deliverance of *the slavery* to sin) (cf. John 1:12-13).

Salvation *continues* throughout life:

- in an ongoing process of sanctification (the deliverance from *the power* and *the pollution* of sin)

And salvation is *perfected*

- in glorification (which is the deliverance from *the presence* of sin and all its consequences: physical death, disasters on earth, corruption of this present world and evil spirits).

When "salvation" is distinguished from "justification" (as here in Romans 5:9-10), then "salvation" indicates the *completion* of the work of which justification is the beginning. It includes deliverance from the evil world, from the evil influence of Satan and his demons; the deliverance from all kinds of suffering and death; the preservation from all causes of destruction, and the inheritance of eternal life in heaven and on the new earth! In Romans 5:9-10 it is deliverance from the wrath of God on the last judgement day. Because justification is complete, it is irreversible and irrevocable. There is no condemnation (doom) reserved for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)! "Salvation" is for Christians an absolute certainty! The God of the Bible never leaves his work unfinished!

Romans 8:29-30 teaches that the people whom he calls, he justifies, and the people whom he justifies, he also glorifies! And Philippians 1:6 teaches that God will carry the good work, which he began in us, to completion! That is why Romans 5:10 says, "If while we were enemies, Christ's death restored us to God's favour, then the life of the resurrected Christ will secure our final and complete salvation forever! There is an indissoluble connection between Christ's death and Christ's resurrection (Romans 4:25). Those who are the beneficiaries of his death must also be the beneficiaries of all that is entailed in his resurrection life. The fact that Christ was resurrected and lives as the exalted Saviour, High Priest, Prophet and King, is a secure guarantee that all believers in Christ will be resurrected and live forever.

The fact that believers in Christ are already in the present justified and reconciled and will be completely saved in the future, makes them joyful. Christians “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2), “rejoice in their sufferings” (Romans 5:3) and “rejoice in God through the Lord Jesus Christ through whom they have now received reconciliation” (Romans 5:11). Christians rejoice in salvation, which has already begun, is continued daily and will be completed at the second coming of Christ!

At the beginning of his ministry Jesus said, “This is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me” (John 6:39). And at the end of his ministry he said, “I have lost not one of those you gave me” (John 18:9)!

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 5:1-11.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 5:1-11.

- 5:1. Make peace with God by believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in your place.
- 5:2. Instead of trying to gain God’s favour by good works or religious works, accept God’s grace by faith in Jesus Christ.
- 5:3-4. Rejoice in your present sufferings, because God uses these sufferings to produce in you perseverance, Christian character and hope that cannot disappoint.
- 5:5. Know that by receiving Jesus Christ into your heart and life, God’s Holy Spirit comes to live in your heart and life. Through his Holy Spirit, God pours his love for you out into your heart. A Christian can love!
- 5:6-10. Realise that by nature you are powerless, ungodly, a sinner and an enemy of God. Realise that all this changes when you believe that Jesus Christ died in your place. Realise that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was the only possible way for God to reconcile his holiness and righteousness with his love and mercy!
- 5:9-11. Be convinced that when you believe in Jesus Christ, you have received justification, reconciliation and salvation!
- ‘Justification’ means that you have been delivered from the guilt and condemnation of sin. God has forgiven all your sins, has declared you to be 100% righteous in his eyes and will regard and treat you in the future as being 100% righteous in his eyes!
- ‘Reconciliation’ means that you have been delivered from the shame and rejection of sin. God has made peace with you and you have made peace with God. His relationship with you and your relationship with him has been completely restored.
- ‘Salvation’ means that you have already been saved from the guilt and condemnation of sin, that you are being saved more and more from the power and pollution of sin in this present world and that at the second coming of Christ you will be completely saved from all the consequences of sin and even the presence of sin.

2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 5:1-11.

Because I believe in Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I believe that God has justified me and made peace with me. Therefore I also have peace with God. “Peace with God” consists of knowing:

that all my sins of the *past* have been forgiven

that all evils in the *present* are being overruled for good

and that all the *future* events in my life cannot bring about my separation from God’s love!

Because I believe in Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I have the assurance that all my pressures, hardships and persecutions for Christ’s sake are very significant. They produce Christian maturity and character in me and make me more fruitful in his service. I also realise that it is not my love for God, but his love for me, that causes me to persevere in my persecution and suffering! I praise God that he will never let go of me! He himself said, “I will never leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence: “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 5:1-11.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	<i>[INTERCESSION]</i> PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER
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Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. **Preach, teach or study** Romans 5:1-11 with another person or group of people.
3. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time with God from half a chapter of Psalm 16, 18, 19 and 22 each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. **Memorisation.** (6) Romans 4:5. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. **Teaching.** Prepare the parable of "the good Samaritan" in Luke 10:29-37. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. **Update your notebook** on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.