

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn to know the Bible. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today we introduce the letter to the ROMANS - PART 2. We will learn about the division and the main messages of the letter to the Romans.

POINT 5. THE DIVISION OF ROMANS

The letter to the Romans may be given the title: “**Romans - the gospel about God’s righteousness**” or “**Romans - a Christian instruction about Gods righteousness.**” The letter portrays Jesus Christ who is our righteousness.

The theme of Romans is written in Romans 1:16-17, “The gospel is the power of God for salvation of everyone who exercises faith ... as it is written, ‘The righteous will live by faith’.”

The letter to the Romans may be divided into two parts:

First. The doctrinal part: Believe God’s righteousness.

It consists of Romans chapters 1 to 11. This part may be divided into four sections:

Section one. The need for God’s righteousness. This is recorded in Romans 1:1 to 3:20. In chapter 1, by pointing out the gross sins of the Gentiles, Paul shows that the Gentiles really need God’s righteousness. In chapter 2, by pointing out the sins of the Jews, he shows that the Jews really need God’s righteousness. In chapter 3:1-20, he draws the conclusion that sin and its condemnation is universal. Pure human righteousness does not exist in the world. God will never justify people by their own so-called righteousness.

Section two. The way to God’s righteousness. This is recorded in Romans chapters 3:21 to 4:25. In chapter 3:21-31, Paul teaches that God has revealed his righteousness in the sacrifice of atonement made by Jesus Christ on the cross. Anyone may receive God’s righteousness by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. In chapter 4, Paul proves that God’s righteousness by faith was also the way of salvation in the Old Testament.

Section three. The effects of God’s righteousness. This is recorded in Romans chapters 5 to 8. In chapter 5, God’s righteousness produces fruits like peace and assurance of complete salvation. In chapter 6, God’s righteousness is indissolubly connected to living a holy life. In chapter 7, the Christian has been set free from the law as interpreted by the Jews (1-6), every sinner experiences the functions of God’s moral law (7-13) and every Christian experiences the struggle with the law of sin, which is still a part of his nature (14-25). In chapter 8, the Christian experiences the work of the Holy Spirit (1-27) and he is more than a conqueror in all circumstances of life (28-39).

Section four. The Giver of God’s righteousness. This is recorded in Romans chapters 9-11. In chapter 9, with a view to the unbelief of Israel, the righteousness and faithfulness of God is vindicated. Israel’s unbelief and rejection were *not total*: there was a remnant. In chapter 10, God’s righteousness is available in Christ and is given to everyone who believes, no matter if he is a Gentile or a Jew. Israel’s unbelief and rejection were *not arbitrary*: God’s invitation to salvation is still extended to the Jews. In chapter 11, God uses the fall of Israel to save the masses of Gentiles and the salvation of the Gentiles to save the masses of Israel (11-24). Israel’s unbelief and rejection were *not final*: God will not only save the fullness of the Gentiles, but also the fullness of the Jews, that is, all those he chose and who would certainly believe in Jesus Christ (25-32).

Second. The practical part: Do God’s righteousness.

It consists of Romans chapters 12-16. This part may be divided into two sections:

Section one. The demonstration of God’s righteousness. This is recorded in Romans chapters 12:1 to 15:13. Chapter 12 teaches the behaviour of the Christian with respect to God, other Christians and opponents. Chapter 13 teaches the behaviour of the Christian with respect to the government, the neighbour and Christ. Chapter 14:1 to 15:13 teaches the behaviour of the strong and weak Christians towards one another.

Section two. The co-workers of God’s righteousness. This is recorded in Romans chapters 15:14 to 16:27. Chapter 15:14-33 describes Paul’s Gentile ministry, policy and plans. Chapter 16 describes other co-workers of God’s righteousness.

POINT 6. THE MAIN MESSAGES OF ROMANS

First. The God of the Bible revealed himself to all people in history.

God has revealed himself through his creation. Romans 1:19-20 says that God has revealed his existence or reality and his power through what can be seen in creation. God also revealed himself through the requirements of his laws written in every human heart. Romans 2:15 says that God has revealed his will how people should conduct themselves through what all people know in their hearts and to which their consciences bears testimony. The other ways through which God reveals himself to man are according to Genesis 6:5,11-13 through his judgements of people's sin, according to Acts 14:17 and 17:24-28 through his providential care of people and according to Matthew 24:14 through the preaching of the gospel. Because God has revealed his existence to all people, no one will be able to make any excuse for not seeking the God of the Bible (Rom 3:11,19).

Second. All people in history have sinned.

Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". *To have sinned* means to have fallen short of the perfect standard of the God of the Bible. It means to have missed God's goal for their lives, which is to express God's glorious presence and characteristics. Therefore according to Romans 3:10-11, there is no difference between one nation and another nation. Although some people might be righteous *in their own eyes*, there is not a single human being who is righteous *in God's eyes*. Although people understand that the world has problems, there is no one who really understands his own deplorable condition. Although people seek knowledge and answers, there is no one who seeks God, who is the Source of understanding and of salvation. Because all people in history have sinned, all people in history need salvation, that is, they need to *receive* God's righteousness before they can be saved.

Third. People are only justified by faith.

One. No one is justified by his own righteousness. Moses said in Leviticus 18:5 that the man who obeys God's laws would "live by them". Romans 10:2-5 says that the Jews thought that this meant that whoever *tried to keep the law as good as he could*, would be justified and receive eternal life, that is, he would be saved. The Jews therefore tried to establish their own righteousness by obeying all the laws of God as good as they could. They were wrong! They forgot that what God demanded was not the trying to keep the law, but *perfect obedience* to the law! And no one in the history of mankind was able to perfectly obey God's laws. Everyone in human history falls short of God's perfect standard. Romans 3:19-20 says that no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law as good as he can, because no one observes the law perfectly. Every mouth on earth will be silenced. No one will have an excuse before the God of the Bible. The whole world will be held accountable to the God of the Bible.

Two. People can only be justified by receiving God's righteousness. Romans 10:4 says that Jesus Christ is "the end of the law" so that people may *receive God's righteousness* by believing in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was sinless and perfectly fulfilled all the demands of God's laws. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will receive God's righteousness as a gracious free gift from God. No one can earn his own righteousness before God by keeping God's laws or by doing good works. But everyone can receive God's righteousness by believing that Jesus Christ died in their place to atone for all their sins. Therefore Romans 3:28 says, "A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law."

Three. People living before Jesus Christ were justified only by faith. Romans 4:1-5 shows that the Old Testament also did not teach that people could be justified by doing the works of the law. Genesis 15:6 says, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." Although people might boast before other people about their works of the law, they can never boast before God. People who rely on their works of the law, try to justify themselves before God, but people who believe in Jesus Christ are justified by God himself.

Fourth. People who have been justified through faith have peace with God.

(Rom 5:1) For the person who believes in Jesus Christ, *peace* means the following.

One. Peace means the assurance that his sins of *the past* have been forgiven, that he has been justified before God and reconciled to God (5:1-2,10).

Two. Peace means that all the evils of *the present* are being overruled by God for the good of the Christian. The suffering he experiences will produce perseverance, Christian character and hope (5:3-5; 8:28).

Three. Peace means that *the future* events on earth cannot separate a Christian from God. He is already saved from God's future wrath. And no one and no difficult circumstance can separate him from God's love for him (5:9,21; 8:37-39).

Fifth. Although the Old Testament law does not save, it has important functions.

Romans 3:28 teaches that no one will be saved by observing the law. Romans 3:20 teaches that the law functions as a *mirror*, in which people recognise their own sin. Romans 5:20 teaches that the law functions as a *magnifying glass*, through which people see the magnitude and ugliness of their sins. Romans 3:19 teaches that the law functions as a *judge* who condemns all people to be guilty and holds them all accountable to God. Galatians 3:24 teaches that the law functions as a *school teacher* who shows people their need of Christ and Christ's righteousness. Romans 13:8-10 teaches that the law functions as a *guide* who shows people how they should live the Christian life. And 1 Timothy 1:9-11 teaches that the law functions as a *bridle* that restrains all kinds of wickedness among people.

Sixth. Justification is indissolubly connected to sanctification.

Justification means that God regards and treats a person as completely righteous before him on the basis of Christ's atonement for sins, which has been accepted through faith. *Sanctification* in Romans chapter 6 means *holiness*, which is *a state rather than a process*. The emphasis in Romans 6 is not on the process of being made holy more and more, but rather on *the once-for-all break with sin and the commitment to righteousness*. *Romans 6:5-7 teaches that everyone, who through faith has been united with Christ in his death, will certainly be united with Christ in his resurrection. Through faith in Christ his old self was crucified with Christ, so that his physical body is no longer conditioned and controlled by his sinful nature. His involuntary and compulsory slavery to sin has definitely been broken. Paul teaches that the true nature and design of Christianity is to produce a new life. The nature of union with Christ is such that it is impossible for any person to share in the benefits of Christ's death, without also sharing in the benefits of his resurrection! Sharing in the benefits of Christ's resurrection primarily means to conform to Christ in a holy life here on earth. Secondly it means to conform to Christ in a life of glorious immortality of spirit and body hereafter (Rom 8:11). Both are included in the new life that flows to us from Jesus Christ.

One. Paul teaches that it is impossible for a person to be conformed to Christ's death, without also being conformed to his life! There is an analogy between Christ's *literal* death and resurrection and the believer's *spiritual* death and resurrection. There is also a causal relationship between the two: Just as Christ's resurrection was the certain consequence of his death, so also *a holy life is the certain consequence* of a Christian's dying with Christ. The resurrection of Christ renders the sanctification of the Christian certain! He shares in Christ's life because he shared in Christ's death.

Two. Paul teaches that it is impossible for a person to be conformed to Christ's life, without being conformed to his death! A Christian must be justified and reconciled to God in order to be holy. He cannot be justified and reconciled without thereby becoming holy! He must be justified in order to be sanctified! Just as Christ's death preceded his resurrection, so justification and reconciliation with God must precede holiness of life. The death of Jesus Christ renders the justification of the Christian certain! A Christian shares in Christ's death in order that he may share in Christ's life. *Thus, the letter to the Romans teaches that justification and holiness and its consequent sanctification are inseparable! The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ renders the justification and holiness and its consequent sanctification of the Christian certain. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Christian shares in both Christ's death and resurrection!

Seventh. Christians should live in the Spirit.

Living in the Spirit is not a mystical experience, but is a daily concrete responsibility. *One. Romans 8:5 teaches that a genuine Christian sets his mind on what the Holy Spirit desires, that is, he sets his mind on what the Bible teaches (Jn 14:26; 16:13-14; Eph 6:17). *Two. Romans 8:13 teaches that a genuine Christian puts to death the misdeeds of the body, that is, he puts to death every kind of sin that expresses itself in the human body. *Three. Romans 6:13 and 19 urges Christians to no longer offer the parts of their body as instruments to do wicked things. Genuine Christians offer every part of their body as instruments to do what is right in God's eyes.

Eighth. God is sovereign in everything.

One. God is sovereign in whom he saves. Romans 8:29-30 teaches that all people whom God elected or chose will be saved.

Two. God is sovereign in his love. Romans 8:35-39 teaches that nothing that happens on earth can separate a Christian from God or God's love for him.

Three. God is sovereign in his goodness. Romans 8:28 teaches that everything that happens on earth is used by God for the good of Christians.

God's sovereignty means that God is the King of the universe and that no one can stop him from carrying out his plan for this world and for every Christian, including you (Phil 1:6)!

Ninth. People become God's children because of what God does.

One. Romans 9:6-9 teaches that people become God's children, not by their human descent, but only by God's sovereign promise.

Two. Romans 9:10-13 teaches that people become God's children, not by their human merit of good works, but only by God's sovereign election and calling (2 Thes 2:13-14).

Three. Romans 9:14-16 teaches that people become God's children, not by their human exertion or human desire or free will, but only by God's sovereign mercy (9:18).

That is what Jesus Christ teaches when he says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" "All the Father gives me will come to me." (Jn 6:37,44,65).

Tenth. God's plan is to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Romans 11:11-27 says that the rejection of disobedient Israel leads to the acceptance of masses of believing Gentiles. And the acceptance of the believing Gentiles leads to the acceptance of masses of believing Jews. Thus, all those whom God elected from the Gentiles and the Jews throughout all generations in history will be saved. Great masses of Gentiles and Jews will be saved. However, the unbelieving Gentiles and unbelieving Jews will never enter into God's kingdom (Mt 8:11-12; Rev 21:8).

Eleventh. God requires that Christians are transformed.

Romans 12:1-3 and 13:14 teaches that all Christians should continually be transformed to more and more Christlikeness. Although God takes the initiative in their salvation and life, every Christian remains *responsible to respond* to God's initiatives. The letter to the Romans teaches that there is *no justification without sanctification* and that there is *no divine election without human responsibility*. A Christian can never be sure that he is saved if he continues to live a life of doubt and disobedience. The doctrines of divine election and justification may not be separated in the mind or lives of Christians from the doctrines of human responsibility and sanctification!

Twelfth. God requires that Christians submit to all authorities.

Romans 13 teaches that all Christians must submit to the authorities that God has set over them. All people must submit to the authority of the God of the Bible and to the authority of the Bible. And all citizens must submit to the civil authorities over them unless they clash with God's commandments (Act 5:29).

Thirteenth. God requires that Christians accept one another.

Romans 14:1-15:13 teaches that the strong Christians must accept *the scruples* of the weak Christians and the weak Christians must not condemn *the convictions* of the strong Christians. Of course, this is only in so far these scruples and convictions do not clash with the truth in the Bible.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. During the next week, read 1 Corinthians 1-8. Next week we will introduce 1 Corinthians.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's Kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".