Romans August 16

Being Accepted

In Romans 4 we have the example of Abraham and how he was found righteous before God.

God made a covenant with Abraham and sealed that covenant with circumcision but Abraham was accepted before God even before the covenant and circumcision. Abraham was found righteous before God because of his faith – the scripture says,

"Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." Romans 4:3.

Abraham was not perfect, he went, he never lost his faith, and he believed that he would be the father of many nations, but without a natural heir, he probably wondered how. – His faith did not leave him and he did not doubt God's promise; his faith filled him with power, and he gave his praise to God. He was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what he promised. Romans 4:20, 21.

We too can be found acceptable before God, by faith, belief in God and in his Son’s resurrection. We will sin but David tells us that – "Happy are those whose wrongs are forgiven, whose sins are pardoned! Happy is the person who sins the Lord will not keep account of!" Romans 4:7, 8. (Psalm 32:1, 2). That will be the case with us too, if we believe in God, he will forgive our sins and forget we ever done.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Because of our sins he was handed over to die, and he was raised to life in order to put us right with God. Romans 4:25.

PRAYER THOUGHT:O Lord, I know that I can never repay all that you have done for me by good works, help me to strengthen my faith, so I can be accepted by you as righteous.

Romans August 17

Sin to Grace

Sin was brought into the world resulting eternal death – But God has shown us how much he loves us – it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! Romans 5:8. Christ died for all of us, now, after all these centuries his sacrifice still frees us from our sins.

Adam, one person brought sin into the world, this may be the basis for what is coined "original sin" but no one is condemned for the sins of others, sin comes later because of human nature but the death and resurrection of one man, Jesus, sets us free from sin – And just as the mass of people were made sinners as the result of the disobedience of one man, in the same way the mass of people will all be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man. Romans 5:19.

As we look around our modern-day world all we see is sin, strife, everything from petty theft to murder, sometimes even within our own families. We must not give up hope we must always look to Christ as our hope, with the Christmas season approaching the hope of a new beginning is reborn.

VERSE FOR TODAY: So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God's grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:21.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, not to lose hope in your grace and not to become discouraged in sin but to be only mindful of your love and grace and sacrifice of your Son.

Romans August 18

Slave or Free

To be a slave, we are held against our will, sin causes us to be a slave. Death was the only way to be free, just as in the days of slavery in the United States, a slave could run away but he would be hunted down and return to his owner, dying was the only way to be free before the emancipation proclamation. Same before Christ, we were dead unto sin, held in slavery with death the only way out and nothing to look forward to after that!

We die to sin in the watery grave of baptism but rise again as Christ did in a new way of life – for surely you know that when we were baptized into the union with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with his death. Romans 6:3. So in the symbolic death, burial and resurrection of baptism we have died to our sin and are no longer slaves to sin or death.

In this new life sin is not domineering – Instead, give yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, and surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes. Romans 6:13b.

We should fall into a new "slavery" a slave to good and to God – But now you have been set free from sin and are slaves of God. Your gain is life fully dedicated to him, and the result is eternal life. Romans 6:22. A labor of love from now through all eternity!

VERSE FOR TODAY: For sin pays its wage – death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, to be a slave unto good into your purpose, O Lord.

Romans August 19

Human Conflict

"I'm only human" is a common phrase to excuse mistakes and sins we commit, being human does cause problems in our existence, there is a continual conflict in our very nature, or want to do right and the sinful nature of man. This seems like an impossible dilemma, since we are all human but there is a solution, Jesus – So then, my brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live.  Romans 8:12–13.

Our human nature is to experiment, this is a trap that many people fall into, and experiment with drugs can lead to addiction. We tend to have varying degrees of mood, days of depression and loneliness, some turn to alcohol to lift their spirits, drown their sorrows but we must resist the temptation to experiment, turn to Jesus as our experiment, you'll be surprised at the relief and spirit lifting experiences that can be had.

We must let the Spirit control, sin must not, we'll fail, slip back, because we are human but with the battle within will be winnable with the Holy Spirit and the prize will be eternal life with Jesus.

VERSE FOR TODAY: God spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children. Romans 8:16.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Constant conflict is not easy but help me, O Lord, with your Spirit to win against seemingly unbeatable odds.

Romans August 20

What’s Ahead?

Doing what the Spirit wants is not easy but the reward for being different is worth the trouble – I consider what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children. Romans 8:18, 19.

Paul was looking forward to the second coming of the Lord and judgment, quite sure that it would be in the near future explanation point but it has been nearly 2000 years since Jesus time on earth and life still goes on! How long?

We live in God's love today and nothing can separate us from that love, Paul puts it best – for I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38–39.

Sometimes life seems fruitless and that no one cares, God still loves us, even if we reject God, he still loves us. Why reject his love, just live and rejoice in it and look forward to future glory.

VERSE FOR TODAY: We know that in all things God works for the good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank you for your unchanging love and knowing I always have your love to surround and protect me, I know I'm never alone.

Romans August 21

Faith, Mercy, Salvation

We all have a part in God's plan, we were created for a purpose, and we must have the faith, the belief to put our trust, our very soul into God's hands.

God gives his mercy to those he chooses – so then, God has mercy on anyone he wishes and makes stubborn anyone he wishes. Romans 9:18. This is why not everyone is receptive to the gospel.

How and why are we chosen to be God's people? – His choice is based on His grace, not on what they have done. For if God’s choice were based on what people do then his grace would not be real grace. Romans 11:6.

What does all this lead to? The ultimate goal of life and, is eternal life with Jesus!

We, Gentiles are quite fortunate that salvation was made available to us, God's grace and the Jewish unbelief made it possible for salvation to be given to everyone! Praise the Lord he doesn't change his mind – For God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses! Romans 11:29. Once Gentiles were offered salvation God won't take away the invitation.

VERSE FOR TODAY: The scripture says,

"Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed." This includes everyone, because there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles; God is the same Lord of all and richly blesses all who call to him. As the scripture says, "Everyone who called out to the Lord for help will be saved." Romans 10:11–13.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Praise your name for your grace, mercy and unchanging mind, O Lord.

Romans August 22

Service in Him

Now assuming we believe, put our faith in Jesus and are saved, what's next? Serving!

In this service Paul warns us – And because of God's gracious gift to me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly then you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and judge yourself according to the amount of faith that God has given you. Romans 12:3. Paul goes on to remind us as he did the Romans that we are part of the body of Christ our "church" membership is not a building, as a member of Christ’s body our service goes outside the four walls of the building.

Outside the protection of the four walls Paul warns us not to fall into the pitfalls of the world – Do not conform yourselves to the standards of the world. Romans 12:2a.

Paul goes on to give guidelines for service: - Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. Ask God to bless those who persecute you – yes, as him to bless, not to curse. Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Romans 12:8b, 12, 14, 15, 17b.

Each occasion calls for a different way to serve, but with the Lord help we can approach each situation.

VERSE FOR TODAY: We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. Romans 12:4.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me in your service, always to do what will glorify your name, guide and direct me in my service to you.

Romans August 23

Following Authorities

We complain today as the people in Paul's day about taxes, laws and governmental authority, Paul doesn't mince words – Everyone must obey the state authorities, because no authorities exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Romans 13:1.

If we live within the civil law we have no reason to fear the authorities if we live in the will of God we have no reason to fear God.

God allows governments to exist, there may be laws and regulations we don't like or understand but God's will is in each one.

Each year we face our taxes and filing of our returns and are amazed at what has been withheld through the year but Paul says – Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honour for them all. Romans 13:7.

We can notice in our world that the rise and fall of total countries and empires and many continents of the world. They change party power, complete rule, like from democracy to dictators; America seems to be truly blessed by God for over 200 years we have existed in democracy.

VERSE FOR TODAY: For this reason you must obey the authorities - not just because of God's punishment but also as a matter of conscience. Romans 13:5.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Praise you, O Lord, for America and help us to live by the rules, bless and keep those under oppression today that they may understand why they have to live this way and help them to know you and grow in your love.