

# Romans 6:1-14

1. "That's too good to be true". Have you ever encountered something that seems too good to be true? (Or can you imagine something that would be)? What was it?
2. For some people God's gospel can seem to be too good to be true. In Romans 1-5 we read that **all people** (whether Jew or Gentile) can **be justified** (declared to be right with God), **by God's grace alone** (not by our effort), **through faith alone** (with no requirement for good works or obedience to law), **in Christ alone** (what God has done for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus). Having now been justified, Christians have complete assurance of salvation from the coming wrath of God.

This can seem to some people to be "too good to be true". What problems might you or others have in accepting this gospel of grace?

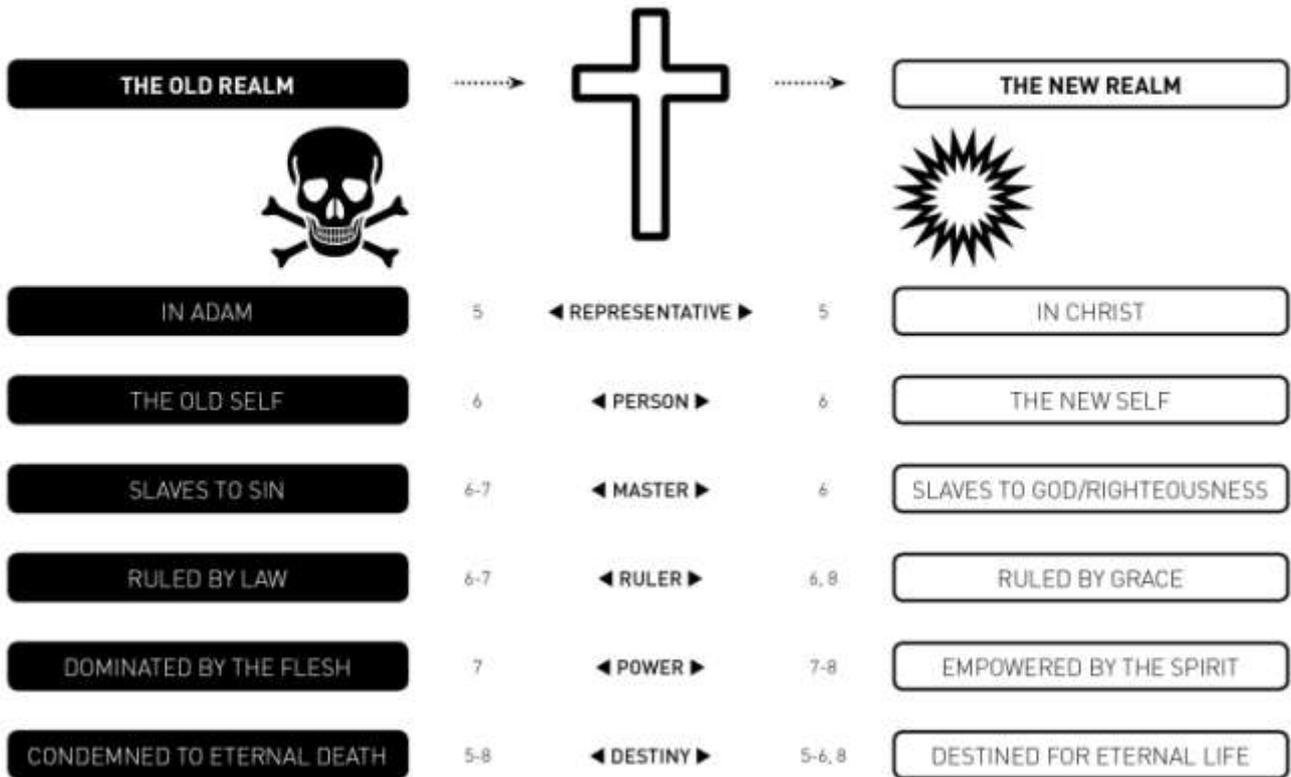
3. In Romans 6 Paul addresses some of the possible (or real!) objections to the law-free, gracious gospel he preaches. Read Romans 6:1-14. How would you explain the logic of the question in verse 1?
4. According to verses 2-10, why is it unthinkable that Christians would want to keep on sinning?
5. What are we to do instead? Why? (v 11-14).
6. Which do you think is the more effective motivation to stop sinning – grace or law? Why?
7. To what extent do you think of yourself as someone who has died and been raised with Christ? What might help you to "count yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (v 11)?
8. In what ways do you think you/we are most susceptible to allowing sin to reign in our mortal bodies? Where are the battles and temptations right now?
9. Pray for each other in the battle not to allow sin to reign over us, and to live new lives in Christ, offering ourselves to God.

## Romans 6:15-23

1. Some people say becoming a Christian involves giving up your freedom to become a slave. Do you think most people would agree or disagree? Why/Why not?
  
2. "Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). This statement raises another possible (or real) question for Paul's message of salvation by grace alone. How would you express the question (v 15) in your own words?
  
3. Read Romans 6:16-23.
  - a) According to verses 16-18, what is a Christian, and how do you become one?
  
  - b) From what slavery have the Roman Christians been set free? What benefits did that slavery reap?
  
  - c) To what slavery are they now to offer themselves? What benefits does this slavery reap?
  
  - d) How does understanding all this answer the question raised in verse 15?
  
  - e) If someone said to you "If salvation is God's gift, then it doesn't matter how we live". How would you answer them from Romans 6, but using your own words?
  
4. In light of this teaching, how accurate/helpful is the diagram attached? Which elements of "the two realms" are mentioned in the passage?
  
5. Does becoming a Christian involve giving up your freedom to become a slave? Why or why not?
  
6. What areas or aspects of your life are currently inconsistent with being a slave of God and "of righteousness leading to holiness"? What changes do you need to make?
  
7. What would be good to pray in response to hearing God's words in this passage?

# THE TWO REALMS ROMANS 5-8

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## Romans 7:1-25

1. *"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do"* (Romans 7:15). To what extent does this resonate with your experience of life? (ie. Are you consistently able to change in order to do/be what you want to do/be?)
2. Romans 7 describes the role of the Law in God's plan of salvation, and what happens when we try to relate to God by obeying it. It is a controversial and difficult passage, but also conveys a very clear message. A key to 'unlocking' this section of Romans is to see that 7:7-25 expands on 7:5 (re life under the law while dominated by the sinful nature), and 8:1-17 expands on 7:6 (re life under God's grace in Christ, empowered by the Spirit).

Read v 1-6.

- a. On what basis can we say that Christians are free from the law? (The laws and commandments God gave to Israel)? Does this mean we are free to do what we want (see v 4)?
  - b. According to verse 5, what is the outcome of trying to please God by law keeping? Why?
  - c. According to verse 6, how is life different for those who belong to Christ?
3. Read v 7-12. Is the law sin? Certainly not! Although life under the law led (Adam/Israel/Paul) and leads (anyone else) to sin and death – it's not the law's fault. The problem is us. According to these verses what role and effects does the good law have for/in sinful people? Try and think of some examples from current life to illustrate the point(s) made here.
  4. Read v 13-20. Did that which is good become death to me? By no means! When sinful people try to live under the law, what do they learn about themselves? In what way is this a helpful thing (v 13)?
  5. Read v 21-25. What outcome/conclusion emerges when sinful people try to be acceptable/pleasing to God through keeping his law? In what way does this help us to understand and appreciate Jesus?
  6. It is important that we don't go home in despair! Read 8:1-8. Jesus has met the righteous requirement of the law – which is death. That is why there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Now, empowered by the Spirit (from the inside), real change is possible. (More on this in our next study).

Are there any hints in 8:1-8 as to how life in the Spirit will lead to real change?

7. What are the implications of this passage for
  - a. Someone who is not a Christian, but sincerely trying hard to live up to God's standards?
  - b. A Christian who constantly feels weighed down by their own sin and failure to conquer it?
  - c. A Christian who wants to address an area of life not pleasing to God, but doesn't know where to start?
  - d. You?

# Romans 8:1-17

1. If you're a Christian, to what extent are you conscious of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? In what situations are you most aware of His presence and power?
  
2. According to Romans 7:6 "*we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code*". This is expanded upon in Romans 8:1-17.
  - a) From verses 1-4, what do you think the Law was powerless to do (because in our sinful nature we can never keep it), that God has now done? Who benefits from this?
  
  - b) From verses 5-8, what do you think is meant by living "according to the sinful nature (= "the flesh"), and living "in accordance with the Spirit"? What differences in character and outcome are outlined here?
  
  - c) From verses 9-11...
    - i. Who is the Holy Spirit?
    - ii. In whom does the Holy Spirit live?
    - iii. What does having the Holy Spirit live in you mean for  
Our present existence?  
Our future existence?
  
  - d) From verses 12-17...
    - i. What obligation flows from having the Holy Spirit dwell in us? (v 12-13)
  
    - ii. What do you think it means to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" by the Holy Spirit? What will this look like in practice?
  
    - iii. What extra reasons are given to persuade us to live this way? (v 14-17)
  
3. If someone said to you – "If you're already a good person, then becoming a Christian doesn't make much difference to your life", how might you answer them from this passage?
  
4. From this passage, for what can you give thanks and praise to God? For what are you encouraged to pray?
  
5. Spend time speaking to our Heavenly Father now.

# Romans 8:18-27

1. In Romans 8 the future for Christians (which is often call “heaven”) is described as a “share in his glory” (8:17). Are you often conscious of a glorious future glory? Why/why not?
  
2. Read Romans 8:18-27. From these verses...
  - a) What is the content of the Christian “hope”? (ie. What can we look forward to?)
    - i. For all creation
    - ii. For ourselves
  
  - b) What confidence can we have that we will experience this future?
  
  - c) What should we expect life to be like in the present?
  
  - d) How can having such a confident “hope” change our perspective and attitudes in the present?
  
3. If you were more conscious of “the glory that will be revealed in us”, how do you think your life would be different?
  
4. In what situations might you choose to read this passage with another Christian in order to help them trust and obey Christ?
  
5. What steps could you take to make “the glory that will be revealed in us” more ‘real’ to you?
  
6. (As time permits) read these passages further describing our future glory...
  - 1 Corinthians 15:50-57
  - 2 Corinthians 4:13-18
  - Philippians 3:17-4:1
  - Colossians 3:1-4
  - Revelation 21:1-5 & 22:1-5
  
7. Thanks and praise God for the future he has secured. Pray that your awareness of, and confidence in, this future might make the things of this world “grow strangely dim”.

# Romans 8:28-39

1. When contemplating our individual futures, or the future of our culture, or our world, what are the biggest threats to that cause people to be afraid or insecure?
  
2. Romans 5-8 begins and ends with firm assurances that being justified by God's grace through faith in Christ will certainly result in final salvation – sharing in God's glory. The gospel Paul preached is completely reliable. It promises and will deliver eternal life! The flow of the argument can be summarised...
  - 5:1-11 Assurance of future glory
  - 5:12-21 Basis for assurance – the work of Christ
  - 6:1-7:6 Does the gospel of grace encourage sin? By no means!
  - 7:7-25 Does life in the Spirit impugn God's good Law? Certainly Not!
  - 8:1-17 Basis for assurance – the work of Christ mediated by the Spirit
  - 8:18-39 Assurance of future glory
  
3. Read 8:28-39. From Verses 28-30...
  - a. Try and explain in your own words each link in the “golden chain” of God's actions for us? What does the past tense of these actions imply about our assurance?
  
  - b. What else does God do in the present that gives us confidence of sharing in Christ's glory?
  
  - c. According to the passage itself, what is the “good” that God works for those who love him? How is this different from what we often think is “good” for us?
  
4. From verses 31-39...
  - a. After the initial “what shall we say in response to this?”, there are five questions asked. Try and identify and understand each question, and it's answer (whether given, or implied)
    - i. v 31
    - ii. v 32
    - iii. v 33
    - iv. v 34
    - v. v 35-39
  
  - b. What is the overall impact of these questions and answers?
  
5. Why do you think Paul chose to include 3 chapters, culminating in such a powerful way, to assure the Romans (and us) of the certainty of our final salvation?
  
6. Do you sometimes wonder if your final salvation is secure? What threats/fears trouble your assurance? How does this passage address your particular fears?
  
7. How might having complete assurance of salvation fuel Christian faith, hope and love?
  
8. How/what should you pray about as a result of understanding this passage?