

**THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS**

*Lesson 7 – Study Questions*

*Romans 4:16-5:6*

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**Review:** *From your experience at the Cornerstone meeting last week, share something that helped build your faith.*

**DAY ONE**

Read Romans 4:16-17

**NOTE:** As we begin today's study, we see that Paul is once again drawing our attention to the promise God made to Abraham. To refresh your memory read Genesis 15:5-6.

1. The word "righteousness" is used many times in the letter of Romans. It is one of the key words of the letter. It is used eight times in the phrase "righteousness of God." According to verse 16 upon what does righteousness depend and why?

2. Reread Romans 4:13. What was the promise to which Paul refers in verse 16 and on what does the promise rest?

3. In your own words, describe what you understand is meant by God's grace.

4. In verse 17 Paul recounts God's promise to Abraham, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations." What is the implication of the next phrase regarding "in the presence of the God in whom he believed"?

5. Paul goes on to list two powers of God: That he gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. To what examples do you think he may be referring?

6. CONNECTION: In today's lesson Paul argues that justification is not limited to those who follow the law of Moses. He uses Abraham as an example of justification outside "the law." Even before God established the covenant sign of circumcision, Abraham obeyed God when he was commanded to leave his home and go where God directed. When Yahweh commanded, Abraham obeyed in faith. This is faith in action. Just as Abraham left a legacy of faith to us, what faith legacy do you hope to leave to your friends and loved ones?

Read and record Deuteronomy 4:9. You are a stepping-stone to God for others. Write a prayer about this thought.

## **DAY TWO**

**Read Romans 4:18-19**

7. Paul begins verse 18 with the strange phrase "Hoping against hope." Refer to the Commentary and then describe how this illustrates Abraham's attitude.

8. According to verse 18, Abraham believed he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” Record the beautiful quote from Genesis 15:5 that supports Abraham’s belief.

9. God promised Abraham that all peoples would be blessed because of him and his descendants. Explain how you think this promise has been fulfilled down through the years.

10. God promised Abraham that he would have a son. What were the obvious obstacles that seemed to make God’s promise unbelievable?

11. What do you think sustained Abraham’s continued belief?

12. CONNECTION: God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah that they would bear a son of their own looked impossible, and yet his promise did come true. Throughout the Bible we read of other improbable situations in which God’s power overcame darkness: The Hebrew people were doomed at the Red Sea, but God rescued them; Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and died but rose again in glory. In our own journey we, too, encounter seemingly impossible situations. Share a time when you felt hopeless or lost, yet God brought goodness out of it. Read and record 1 Corinthians 10:13 and let thoughts of God’s faithfulness lead you into prayer.

### DAY THREE

Read Romans 4:20-22

13. In today's lesson, Paul continues to describe Abraham as an example to the people. Complete the beautiful description of Abraham's faith in verse 20:

No distrust made him

But he grew strong in his faith as

14. In verse 21 Abraham was fully convinced that God could deliver on his promises. Read and record Psalm 145:13.

15. In verse 22 Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 for a third time. Why do you think Paul quotes this text so often?

16. Abraham believed that God could bring about the impossible. Read Matthew 14:28-33 to see how someone else encountered the impossible. How did he differ in his reaction?

17. An old hymn is entitled "Standing on the Promises of God." What does standing on the promises of God mean to you?

18. CONNECTION: Abraham gave glory to God by trusting God and allowing God to work through him in the promise of an heir (*see CCC 145*). We give glory to God whenever we allow God to be first in our lives and are willing to obey his will. What are ways in which you feel you can give glory to God by allowing him to work through you? Write your answer in the form of a short prayer supporting your desire to give God glory.

Read and record 2 Corinthians 1:20. Yes and amen!

#### **DAY FOUR**

**Read Romans 4:23-25**

19. Romans 4:23-24 (NRSVCE) includes the word “reckoned” twice. Look up the biblical definition of “reckoned” and briefly explain how you think Paul is using its meaning in these verses.

20. For whom does Paul tell us the words “it was reckoned to him (as righteousness)” were written?

21. According to verse 24 what is the requirement for righteousness to be reckoned to us?

22. Msgr. Mikesch notes that Abraham reached the point of absolute trust in God. Do you feel that you, as a Christian believer on your spiritual journey, have absolute trust in God? Or are you challenged by this concept?

23. What two phrases describe Jesus in verse 25?

**THINK:** *CCC 1987*, under the Article 2 “Grace and Justification” states that, “The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ and through Baptism...” Are you now comfortable with Paul’s usage of the words reckoned, justification and righteousness? Chapter 5 will go on to talk more about justification.

24. CONNECTION: Our God is just and merciful. He made us to love him, but because we turned away from him, he sent his own Son to redeem us. God sends us his grace so that we can believe in him and he reckons it for righteousness on our part. We earn none of these things on our own. The unmerited free gift of God’s mercy and grace is a thousand times more wonderful than any earthly prize we could ever receive. Think of a free, unearned gift you have received from a friend or loved one, and consider how you felt when you received it. In what ways do you respond to the free, unearned gift of God’s grace?

As Abraham is the “father of all who believe” and the model of Christian hope, Mary, the mother of Jesus, stands out in the New Covenant as the most perfect embodiment of the obedience of faith. (*Hahn and Shea*) Read and record Mary’s words from Luke 1:38 and begin your prayer today asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for you as you continue on your path to justification.

## DAY FIVE

Read Romans 5:1-4

25. As today's lesson begins, Paul says that we have been justified by faith. Since we are justified, according to verse 1, what do we have?

**THINK:** Peace with God is a priceless gift, for which some people strive in vain their whole lives. Thank God for this great gift available to you in your life.

26. Verse 2 begins, "we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand." What is the grace to which Paul is referring, and what do the words "in which we stand" mean to you?

27. Verse 2 continues "and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God." In this instance, what do you think the word "boast" conveys?

**THINK:** Do you think Paul's idea of "hope" differs from the meaning of hope in our ordinary language? Why or why not?

28. Paul knows that the Roman Christians have endured persecution because of their faith. In verse 3, what will "suffering accepted in faith" produce? (Good memory verse)

29. List the four steps Paul gives in the progression of suffering in verses 3-4.

30. CONNECTION: St. Therese of Lisieux wrote a commentary on this passage which includes these thoughts:

*“Everything is a grace, everything is the direct effect of our Father’s love - difficulties, contradictions, humiliations, all the soul’s miseries, its burdens, its needs - everything, because through them, it learns humility, realizes its weakness – everything is a grace because everything is God’s gift. Whatever be the character of life or its unexpected events - to the heart that loves, all is well.”*

How do you see St. Therese’s words reflected in the lesson from Paul today? Can you find ways in which you too recognize this to be true in your life?

Read 1 Peter 1:6-7. Let a tapestry of faith, hope and love, which God weaves into your life, lead you into prayer.

## **DAY SIX**

**Read Romans 5:5-6**

**NOTE:** Popular piety frequently construed reverses and troubles as punishment for sin; cf. Jn 9:2. Paul therefore assures believers that God’s justifying action in Jesus Christ is a declaration of peace. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ displays God’s initiative in certifying humanity for unimpeded access into the divine presence. Reconciliation is God’s gift of pardon to the entire human race. Through faith one benefits personally from this pardon or, in Paul’s term, is justified. *USCCB, Romans 5:1-11*

31. In today’s lesson we study only two verses, but they are very powerful. The heading for chapter 5 in the NRSVCE is “Results of Justification.” If you have access to the NABRE translation, record its heading for chapter 5.

32. Our hope in justification is rooted in a promise from God. What is that promise? (refer back to Romans 4:2-25)

33. In the beginning of verse 5 Paul says that this hope cannot disappoint us. Why is he so certain?

34. Do you find any similarity in the answer above and what Paul says in Ephesians 1:13-14? If so, what is the similarity?

35. Verse 5 ends with the words “because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” Refer to the Commentary and record what Msgr. Mikesch says about the Spirit’s presence within us.

**THINK:** Consider for a moment the wisdom of God. He sees us in our weakness and he knows exactly the right time to show us his support.

36. CONNECTION: Christ proved his love for us in his willingness to die for us. To suffer for another person is one of the most significant signs of love. It is this love which makes suffering creative – life giving. Can you think of some of the people in your life who have been willing to sacrifice for you? In what way(s), large or small, did they do this and what was the positive outcome for you?

Read and record 1 Peter 4:1. Knowing that God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, write a prayer of thanksgiving and praise.

Read pages 32-36 in the Commentary by Rev. Msgr. Gregory R. Mikesch, M.Div., M.A. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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