

Romans 9 - You're Not Crazy

We have been working our way through the book of Romans because it is so important for our understanding of the Gospel. You might hear someone swearing that they are telling you the truth by saying, "It's the Gospel truth." What they mean is that what they are saying is as true as the Gospel. Or, you might be in a church service somewhere and a Scripture is read from either the book of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John and at the end of the they say, "The Gospel of the Lord," and everyone responds "Praise to you, Lord Jesus." The central part of our faith is the Gospel so that we refer to it so much. The problem with this is that when you use a word so much, it actually can get watered down, or taken for granted. In the first message we made sure to point out that the Gospel (which basically means good news) is the good news that Jesus, who is God, the Son, came to earth and made Himself a sacrifice for our sin by dying on the Cross, and rising from the grave, He conquered death and provided eternal life. That is putting it concisely. Those who are brought up in the Christian faith pretty much recognize this. As a concise statement it is boiled down as much as possible so that it is short while it has everything that is the most significant. There are more issues that are associated with the Gospel, and that is what Paul was writing about. In fact, what he wrote in this letter to the Romans had so much important detail in it that it was the mainstay of preachers throughout history. In Romans, Paul covers how the Gospel works in our lives to provide salvation.

We want to remember that from chapters 1-3, Paul explains how everyone needs to be saved because everyone is a sinner. There is no one who has any excuse because God has shown everyone how they are sinners by one means or another (which is covered in the first three chapters) and that Jesus is the only way to take away that sin in chapter 4. People naturally make the mistake of thinking that after they believe in Jesus that He is the God, the Son, that they

have to work hard to make sure be good enough for heaven. That is why we need this fuller explanation of the Gospel in Romans because Paul covered this in chapter 4 that, no, we don't have to work to pay for our sins because Jesus did all the payment. All we have to do is trust Him to apply His payment for our sins. Later on, to recap Paul will say, in Romans 10:

Rom 10:9-13 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Paul went on in chapter 5 to point out we have a permanent peace with God, even though we might not have peace in the world. In Romans 6 Paul covers where our works *are* important. He explained that in salvation, what God did was to transform our spirit from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ. In chapter 8, he is going to deal with how our body is going to be transformed in the resurrection.

We are sinners, chapters 1-3, Jesus saves us by faith and gives us peace, chapters 4-5, and we should serve God, chapter 6. This is what it means to be saved. But then comes a little nagging problem, which is covered now in Romans 7. We admitted we were sinners who were powerless to get to heaven. We trusted Christ and He did, indeed, change us for eternity. We want to serve God and we love it when we can make a

spiritual difference for people. We might fight temptation off a lot, but sometimes we end up giving in to it. We go to church and see all kinds of people praising God and living a life of victory over sin. They talk about how their life changed and give God all the glory. Yet, when we look at our own life, we see ourselves losing the battle. As much as we clean up our life, we still lose the battle sometimes. Even though we might get our life mostly cleaned up on the outside, secretly, on the inside, we know we keep losing. There are two common wrong responses to this problem.

One wrong response is to redefine the Gospel and suggest that we need to have more payment made for our sins. The new, wrong, definition of the Gospel is that Jesus opened the door of heaven, but we have to work to be worthy enough to go through the door.

The other wrong response is to just give up trying because we will never be as good as all those other victorious Christians. There must be just something wrong with us because we can't keep up with the spiritual Joneses.

As we now look at Romans 7, we will see more about the true Gospel and how this problem is dealt with.

1. You aren't crazy -

The first thing that you should find comforting is that you aren't alone in this problem. Not only are all the "good" Christians going through the same thing, but the apostle Paul, who expanded the growth of churches through all the Roman world with the Gospel – the apostle Paul, who wrote over half the books of the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – that same Paul had the same problem as we do. Listen to Paul's lament:

Rom 7:14-16, 19 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. **[sold under sin means that he feels like he is sold like a slave because he feels like a slave to sin. No matter what he does he**

feels like he is bound to his temptations]

15For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. **[He admits that he doesn't *allow* his sin. The good things that he *does* allow, he doesn't end up doing them What he ends up doing are the things that he hates.]**

16If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. **[Since he doesn't allow for it, he admits that he recognizes that the law is good and that it's just that *he* is the problem.]**

...

19For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. **[He confesses that the good that he wants to do he ends up not doing, but even though he doesn't want to sin, he ends up doing that anyway.]**

Sometimes, we are afraid to complain because we don't want to sound like we are whining. When we complain, we don't want someone to tell us how unreasonable our complaint is. We just want someone to let us know that we aren't crazy, there is nothing wrong with complaining. We need to know that anyone else would feel bad in the same situation. That is the blessing of Romans 7. When we feel bad about our sin and think that there must be something wrong with us because we struggle with our sin, it is good to know that someone as spiritual as Paul went through the same problem. Forget about all those people sitting beside you in the pew that seem like they have their lives all together. When we think twice about it, we know that they are probably as messed up as we are. But you would think that Paul certainly had this problem licked. If Paul could face temptation and find himself weak in the face of temptation, then maybe we aren't crazy for feeling the same problem.

This is what should give us hope. If

Paul could find the victory in the face of temptation, then we can, too. Paul then goes on to explain why this is a problem. If you can identify how the problem works, you can then go on to deal with the problem.

2. The problem is the flesh -

The problem with giving in to sin is in the flesh.

Rom 7:18-23 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) **[Paul says very specifically that the problem is in the flesh]** dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. **[This problem is what makes his will weak. He wants to do good, but he just can't find the gas peddle. His batteries are undercharged. His spiritual bank is sending him overdraft notices and charging him fees.]**

19For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: **[He identifies here that there is sin dwelling in him, that evil is present in him. He delights in the law according to the inward man, the spirit but...]**

23But I see another law in my members, **[there is another law in his members...that means his body parts, again, in his flesh]** warring against the law of my mind, **[His body is making a war against his mind, his spirit]** and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members **[Where is the law of sin? In his members, his**

body].

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. **[Paul is in the middle of explaining that as long as you walk in the flesh you cannot do the things that you would.]**

In 1 Thessalonians. Paul identifies yet another part of us that comes in to play: the soul.

1Thess 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole **spirit and soul and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are born again with a new, transformed spirit if we have asked Christ for eternal salvation. The problem is that we have the old sin stained soul and corrupted body. How can we deal with this? Is there no hope?

3. The remedy -

First Step

The remedy, first, is to make sure that you actually are a child of God. It is so common that just because a person has right doctrine that that is proof they are a child of God. All that proves is that they have accountability before God. The next problem is that many people don't even have a right doctrine when it comes to salvation. They may have a lot of other doctrines right, and they might have the salvation doctrine 99% right, but the 1% they are missing is the critical part that actually makes them a true Christian. There is no such thing as an almost Christian.

Here are some clues that you might not be a true Christian:

- You have a false understanding of Christ and think He is only a prophet,

a teacher, an angel, some created being, or someone who was once a man and became spiritually exalted to become the Son of God and not God, the eternal son come in the flesh to save us.

2John 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

- You think that you have to keep up your good works to make sure you stay saved.

Gal 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

- If you think that you can lose your salvation, which would indicate that you don't understand the idea of eternal forgiveness and *eternal* life.

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Rom 10:10-13 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13For whosoever shall call upon

the name of the Lord shall be saved.

As Romans 10:10 says, you might have all the right beliefs or have the key beliefs corrected, but then comes the final step. Don't be ashamed of being wrong, get it right. If you believe right, you will not be ashamed to take the final step. You have to call upon the name of the Lord in faith and repent.

2Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Next steps

Then comes the next steps. It's actually one step that you do over and over. You serve God.

Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

You exercise the mind, your new spirit, serving God. That attitude alone requires you to be selfless and responsive to God. It is a new discipline. Too many times people are trying to figure out what they *don't* have to do when it comes to religion. Or, they try to figure out how they can substitute the work for God with something else, usually some little ritual...which when you think about it is actually superstitious. If I make this motion and bow this many times and kneel, that counts as holiness. So what do you do? I'm glad you asked...it's all in the Bible. You say, "Really? Show me, show me what to do!" Okay, keep coming out to church...that's what I do service by service. Currently I am in the middle of teaching about the depths of prayer on Thursdays. On Sunday afternoons I am covering church history to strengthen our convictions and to explore the things they did right and how to avoid the disasters they dug themselves into.

Paul actually anticipated this issue in the Romans 6.

Rom 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

1Tim 4:7-8 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

8For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

We know we need to get physical exercise and actually apply ourselves to short bursts of effort to do so. We are ready to acknowledge that we have to plan our *physical* exercise, but what about planning our spiritual exercise. You may come and talk about a plan...like you have a physical trainer at the gym, you can have a spiritual trainer at the church! Here is a start.

Gal 5:16-25 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the

kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, longsuffering,
gentleness, goodness, faith,

23Meekness, temperance:
against such there is no law.

24And they that are Christ's have
crucified the flesh with the
affections and lusts.

25If we live in the Spirit, let us
also walk in the Spirit.

Stop walking and holding hands with
the world, temptation, and sin. Don't
hang in fellowship with the works of
darkness. Walk in the light as you step
out and exercise yourself to Godliness.

Whatever is the next step you can
take, now is the right time to take it
while God is speaking to your heart. You
will deal with temptation. You might fall
to that temptation. Paul anticipated that,
but the next step is to put on your Gospel
shoes and get right back in the race.

Rom 10:9-13

1. You aren't crazy - Rom 7:14-16
2. The problem is the flesh - Rom 7:18-23, Gal 5:17, 1Thess 5:23
3. The remedy - 2John 1:7, Gal 3:1-3, Heb 10:10, Rom 10:10-13, 2Cor 5:17, Rom 7:25, Rom 6:16, 1Tim 4:7-8, Gal 5:16-25