

Trusting in the Gospel of Jesus

Summary and Goal

Paul wrote Romans as a letter to the scattered house churches of Rome to remind Jewish and Gentile believers of the gospel and that the gospel empowered them to accept one another just as Christ had accepted them. God promised Abraham long ago that he would have a diverse family, and God has kept that promise (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 4:12-18; 15:8-12). In this study through passages often called “the Romans Road,” we will see that God redeems, regenerates, and unifies Jews and Gentiles through the sacrifice and righteousness of Jesus. The gospel creates a new transcultural, multiethnic family that learns to love one another despite the deep, destructive ethnic and class barriers that are prominent in the world throughout every era.

Session Outline

1. God’s righteousness is revealed through the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).
2. All have sinned and earned death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23a).
3. God provided Jesus as a substitute for sinners (Rom. 5:8; 6:23b).
4. God reconciles and declares sinners righteous through Jesus (Rom. 5:9-11).
5. God saves all who trust in Jesus (Rom. 10:9-13).

Background Passage: Romans 1–11

Session in a Sentence

The gospel is the good news that God has provided salvation to sinners through Jesus Christ.

Christ Connection

God’s righteousness is revealed through the gospel. Because of sin, all deserve death and separation from God, but God provided Jesus to be our substitute, to pay our sin penalty, to remove our sin, and to provide His righteousness in its place. All who trust in Jesus will be saved.

Missional Application

Because we are sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we earnestly profess Christ to others, appealing for them to respond to the gospel and be saved.

Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

Introduction

EXPLAIN: Use the paragraph on page 75 in the DDG to highlight how disunity destroys while unity creates.

Unity creates, while disunity destroys. *Families* are formed through the union of marriage. But they are fractured through separations and divorce and the myriad of issues that lead to those outcomes. *Nations* with unity on good and strong principles, such as freedom for all, experience productivity and vitality, but they wither and die through disunity. Even in the *church*, unity in Christ brings glory to God and displays the transforming power of the gospel, but she suffers under disunity, as does her mission.

- *Nations Example:* Abraham Lincoln feared for the United States prior to the Civil War. In 1858, while running for the U.S. Senate, Lincoln quoted Jesus with reference to the national disagreement over slavery—“A house divided against itself cannot stand” (see Matt. 12:25).¹
- *Church Example:* When the ethnic divisions and prejudice in the world characterize the church, how can her witness to Jesus be attractive and engaging? But divided people becoming family in Christ brings glory to God.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 75).

The Gospel: The Bible teaches that the gospel is both an **event** and a **story**. These aspects do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another, but together inspire us to a life of **devotion** and **mission**.

Essential Doctrine “The Gospel”: The Bible teaches that the gospel is both an **event** and a **story**. First, it is an event that took place at a specific point in history, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:21). Second, the gospel is also the story of redemption that God has planned since “before the foundations of the earth” (Eph. 1:4), which runs through Scripture, and which culminates in a restored and redeemed creation—a new heaven and new earth where sin, death, and suffering will never again plague humanity, and God’s people will live with Him forever (Isa. 25:8; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21). The event and story do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another, but together inspire us to a life of **devotion** and **mission**.

SUMMARIZE: In this study through passages often called “the Romans Road,” we will see that God redeems, regenerates, and unifies Jews and Gentiles through the sacrifice and righteousness of Jesus. The gospel creates a new transcultural, multiethnic family that loves one another despite the barriers prominent in the world throughout every era.

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Point 1: God's righteousness is revealed through the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).

READ Romans 1:16-17 (DDG p. 76).

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 76) to emphasize that our salvation is dependent on God's righteousness granted to us through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Letter of Romans overflowed from the heart of a man who had been captivated by Jesus and His gospel (as we will see in a later session). Formerly a Pharisee zealous for Jewish tradition and purity who persecuted Christians even to death, Paul experienced the power of God through the gospel and became a bold missionary who founded churches comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. The redemptive work of Christ is able to save all sinners; the righteousness of God is granted to all who come to Jesus in faith.

- Paul's letter to the house churches in Rome reminded both Jews and Gentiles that salvation is a matter of God's righteousness, not our own. As a Pharisee, the epitome of a "good" Jew, Paul had based his righteousness on Jewish traditions, such as bloodline, circumcision, food laws, and observance of the Sabbath. But his experience with Jesus upended his expectations. Through the gospel, Paul learned that Jews, and also Gentiles, are not considered righteous by the works of the law. Inclusion in God's family is based solely on faith in Jesus.
- Through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to give him a redeemed, regenerated, and righteous family, a family comprising many nations, a family to bless the world (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:5-6; 17:1-10). As a Pharisee, Paul had failed to see the glory of God in Jesus, so he persecuted the church. But as a believer, he now saw the glory and power of God in the gospel. Therefore, he was not ashamed of the gospel because it was the means by which God saved him and brought him from death to eternal life, and not only him but all those who believe, both Jews and Gentiles.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



How has the power of God transformed your life through the gospel? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

Point 2: All have sinned and earned death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23a).

READ Romans 3:23; 6:23a (DDG p. 76).

^{3:23} For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ... ^{6:23a} For the wages of sin is death,

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 76) to show that everyone, both Jew and Gentile, stands before God guilty and condemned and deserving of death for their sin.

Paul reminded the Gentile believers in Rome that they had no room to believe they were superior to their Jewish siblings in the faith. Prior to their own coming to Christ, they had stood condemned and alienated from God because of their idolatry and depravity (1:18-32). But Paul also reminded the Jewish believers that they too were in need of a Savior because they were guilty of the same things as the Gentiles (2:1-29). Therefore, both Jews and Gentiles stand guilty and condemned—everyone deserves death for their sin.

- With a string of Old Testament quotes, Paul made it clear for both the Jews and the Gentiles that “there is no one righteous” and “all have turned away” from the living God (3:10-18; see Ps. 14:1-3; Eccl. 7:20). Looking to the righteousness and glory of God as a benchmark for our behavior, no one lives up to that standard. We all fall short and incur the penalty of doing so.
- Having convicted every human being, including himself, of sin against God, Paul announced the sentence: Both Jews and Gentiles have earned physical death and spiritual death because of their sin and rebellion. Whether Jews performed the “works of the law” or Gentiles tried to earn salvation through good deeds, no one can rescue themselves from the penalty and power of sin and death. Sin, no matter how small we perceive it, earns death, and death is what we are all scheduled to receive as sinners.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What is revealed about us when we question the sentence of death for sin? (that we don't fully understand the justice and goodness of God; that we downplay the significance of sin; that we look at sin from a personal perspective instead of God's perspective; that we do not grasp the meaning of God's holiness; that we think we are better than we are)

Point 3: God provided Jesus as a substitute for sinners (Rom. 5:8; 6:23b).

READ Romans 5:8; 6:23b (DDG p. 77).

^{5:8} But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us ... ^{6:23b} but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 77) to highlight that God provided Jesus as a substitute for sinners.

Not only did Paul diagnose all of humanity as sinners and deserving of death, he was clear about our prognosis in this condition. Jews and Gentiles alike are “ungodly” in their sin and “helpless” to atone for their sins (5:6). Humanity is doomed and there is nothing we can do about it. But God, who loves humanity with a love better than life, sent Jesus, His one and only Son, to die for us while we were still sinners (Ps. 63:3; Rom. 5:8). In love, Jesus substituted Himself on the cross for both Jews and Gentiles to forgive our sins and reconcile us to God and each other.

Voices from Church History

“There is no difference at all between the Greek, the Scythian, the Thracian or even the Jew, for all are in the same plight ... Even if you have not done the same sins as others, you have still been deprived of God’s glory just as they have been, because you are among those who have offended ... However, Paul was saying this not to cast them into despair but rather to show the love of the Lord toward man, as he goes on to say.”²

—Chrysostom (c. 349-407)

- There can be no forgiveness, no atonement of sin, without the shedding of blood, so Jesus, out of measureless love, bled so we could be forgiven for eternity (Lev. 17:11; John 1:29). Through faith in this Jesus, our sin is nailed to the cross and His righteousness is nailed to us (Rom. 5:12-21). The record of our sins has been erased by the beautiful blood of Jesus, and because of His blood sacrifice, Jesus has disarmed sin, defeated death, and dethroned the evil one in our lives (Col. 2:14-15). Once we were chained to an evil master called sin, but now we are enslaved to our good God (Rom. 6:22). Jesus has won our forgiveness and freedom.
- The depth of God’s love so far outreaches our own love that it’s no comparison. Consider, as Paul did, the kind of person you would be willing to die for. Outside of family members, the number of people we would deem worthy of such a sacrifice is small. They would have to be just, even good, by our standards; plus, they would need to have made an impact on our own lives (5:7). Strangers or enemies—these would be discounted outright. But here is where the love of God outstrips our own. God the Father sent God the Son to die for sinners, for the people who reject, oppose, and hate Him. This is the deep, deep love of God.

PACK ITEM 9: CHRIST DIED FOR US: Read the **George Matheson quote** on this poster, and then ask group members the following question.



How does the love of God compare with the kinds of love found in the world? (God's love does not show favoritism; God's love extends to enemies; God's love knows no end and never fails; God sacrifices all for those He loves)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 77) to show how the gift of God's Son as a substitute leads to God's gift of eternal life for those who believe in Jesus.

Christ died for our forgiveness, but He also died so that we might have eternal life as a gift from God. Eternal life means living forever, as opposed to the death that our sin has earned us (Rom. 6:23a). Of course, this includes going to be with the Lord when we die physically (2 Cor. 5:8) and being raised from the dead physically when Christ returns (1 Thess. 4:13-18). But we receive the gift of eternal life even now. By faith in Jesus, we experience the resurrection life of the Messiah, which produces righteousness and justice on earth through us (Rom. 6:10-14).

- Salvation, including the gift of eternal life, cannot be achieved; it can only be received. At the foot of the cross, everyone, both Jews and Gentiles, needs the same thing—grace. All sinners deserve to die and go to hell in judgment, but God loves the world and He is willing to save all those who come to His Son, Jesus Christ, in faith. The redeemed sons and daughters of God then have full assurance that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ—not even death (Rom. 8:38-39).
 - Not only does God save sinners and give them eternal life in the future, He sets them free from slavery to sin and He sanctifies them for eternal life now (6:21-22). By faith, all believers are buried in Jesus' death for sin through baptism into Christ Jesus so that we may walk in newness of life, just as Jesus was raised from the dead (6:4-7). Christians participate in and reap the benefits of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. This includes freedom from the controlling and oppressive nature of sin and the work of the Holy Spirit of God, who, in effect, certifies our relationship with the Father and conforms us to the righteous image of Jesus Christ (8:12-17,28-30). The gospel is not simply about making bad people good; the gospel is about how the God who is life brings dead people to life in Christ (6:10-11).
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Point 4: God reconciles and declares sinners righteous through Jesus (Rom. 5:9-11).

READ Romans 5:9-11 (DDG p. 78).

⁹ How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. ¹⁰ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 78) to emphasize that salvation, which includes our justification and reconciliation with God, is God's work alone and He accomplished it through His Son, Jesus. Then *apply* the horizontal implications of our vertical reconciliation with God.

Paul emphasized God's work in the salvation of sinners. Our sin deserves God's wrath, and were it not for the blood Jesus shed on the cross, we would remain separated from God in our unrighteousness. But through faith in Jesus, God graciously gives to both Jews and Gentiles His Son's righteousness, by which we are justified, or declared righteous, in God's sight. God made the way through Jesus for us to be given what we could not earn. Because of the work of Jesus, believers are reconciled to God and saved from final judgment. Therefore, we boast only in God for our status as His children.

Application: One of Paul's aims with his Letter to the Romans was to foster unity among the ethnically and socioeconomically diverse groups of people in the house-churches of Rome. He did so with the gospel, which equalizes everyone at the foot of the cross. Justified people treat each other justly by loving "one another deeply as brothers and sisters" (12:10). Both Jews and Gentiles were God's enemies on account of their sin, yet Jesus died to transform them into God's children, brothers and sisters in Christ. The basis of Jew and Gentile unity was their fundamental shared need of God's grace, righteousness, and reconciliation and God's provision of these. Through Jesus, God has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to Himself and to one another. Therefore, disunity, ethnocentrism, and prejudice are "deviating from the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14).

The unity of Jews and Gentiles two thousand years ago mattered deeply to God, just as the unity of African-American, White, Latino, Asian, and all other followers of Jesus matters to Him today. Because of our reconciliation to God, God's people are reconciled to each other, displaying unity and love across ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries as the world watches (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 2:14-16). This unity demonstrates to everyone the beauty and power of the gospel to save everyone who calls on Jesus.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What might we be tempted to boast in regarding our salvation? (our good works; our attendance in church and Bible study; our knowledge of the Bible and theology; our victories over temptation and sin; our sanctification in comparison to that of others)

Point 5: God saves all who trust in Jesus (Rom. 10:9-13).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Romans 10:9-13 (DDG p. 78).

⁹ If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, ¹² since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. ¹³ For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 78) to highlight our part to play in God’s work of salvation: **confess** and **believe**.

Salvation is God’s work, yet we still have a part to play: we **confess** and **believe** in Jesus. To **confess** “Jesus is Lord” is to submit to His kingship and to live accordingly, obeying His commands throughout the Word of God and the leading of His Spirit. To “**believe** in your heart” means to have faith and trust in Jesus, the true Lord of the universe. Specifically, we are to believe in His crucifixion and resurrection. And everyone who believes—be he Jew or Gentile or one of the many peoples on the earth—everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved (Joel 2:32).

- Through **confession** and **faith**, both Jews and Gentiles shared a common loyalty to Jesus, their common Savior, the One who laid His life down on the cross to die for the sins of the world and then rose from the dead. Paul wanted all believers, in view of God’s mercy, to be living sacrifices and to allow their minds to be transformed. Then they could build on this shared relationship with Jesus and be empowered to live in community as the unified body of Christ (Rom. 12:1-18).
- Because everyone who believes will be saved, the gospel, therefore, is for everyone, without distinction (see Acts 10:28,34-35). This comes as a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that all the peoples on earth would be blessed through him; even more, both Jews and Gentiles would comprise his promised family by faith in Jesus (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 4:16-25). This belief is why Paul, a Jew, said he was “obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish” (Rom. 1:14). May we be obligated to seek unity cross-culturally in our churches and be on mission to reach everyone, since there is no distinction between people. Let’s join God by being missionaries and agents of reconciliation. This is what God’s new community looks like. This is what the power of the gospel creates.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What are some worldly distinctions between people that believers must overcome for the sake of the gospel? (**race and heritage; socioeconomic classes; educated and uneducated; differing politics; male and female; differing religious beliefs**)

My Mission

EXPLAIN: The world needed good news—it still does. God’s image bearers are enslaved to sin and death (Rom. 3:10-12). But God, out of love that could only be measured by the cross, sent His Son, Jesus, as humanity’s atoning sacrifice (3:21-26; 5:8,15-17). As the Lamb of God, Jesus’ blood breaks the power of sin and death for all who will believe, forgives His people of sin, declares His people to be righteous, and reconciles His people to Himself and to each other as brothers and sisters (5:8-11; 6:6-7). Jews and Gentiles can now accept one another, just as Christ also accepted them, to the glory of God (15:7). The unity of God’s church across ethnic, gender, and class barriers was and is a witnessing tool to the world that is divided by the same. As God’s people love each other, regardless of their differences, and proclaim the gospel, their presence in the world becomes a picture of the love and power of God, drawing people toward the kingdom of Jesus so they too can believe and be saved.

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 79), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we are sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we earnestly profess Christ to others, appealing for them to respond to the gospel and be saved.

- **How will you demonstrate your faith in Jesus, the Son of God sent to die for your salvation from sin and death?**
- **What are some ways your group/ church can strive for unity in the gospel across ethnic and socioeconomic lines?**
- **Who are some people you once believed were beyond the reach of the gospel, and how will you reach out to them with the good news?**

Voices from the Church

“By faith we are united to the Messiah in his condemnation on the cross, and we are also united to his justification at his resurrection ... We are incorporated into the righteousness of Jesus Christ so that his vindication and his obedient act that were the basis for it are counted as ours. Justification also has vertical and horizontal elements in declaring the sinner to be right with God and also in bringing Gentiles into the family of Abraham.”³

—Michael Bird

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, thank You for the awesome gift of Your Son to die in our place for our salvation. We could not earn this, nor do we deserve it. So we praise You for Your great grace. Help us to live in that grace with our fellow believers and for the benefit of the unbelieving world to know Jesus by faith and be saved. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 80-82), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 83) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.

Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 80-82) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 83) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 80-82) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 3** as a part of point 3 in the session: **Jesus died on a Roman cross that was built by our sin in order to heal us, to reconcile us to His Father, so we could experience the love we've always longed for. We have always been loved, and the gospel proves how much.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 2:** "Just as God heard the children of Israel crying because they were enslaved in Egypt, He heard our cries while we were trapped in our sin."
- **Day 4:** "In Christ, we are eternally reconciled to God the Father; therefore, we can be reconciled to each other."



Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 83) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share with one another methods and resources they use to preach the gospel to themselves on a daily basis.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

Additional Commentary

Point 1: God's righteousness is revealed through the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).

“The train of thought is: ‘I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome *because* I am not ashamed of the gospel ...’ From this perspective, then, verses 16-17 belong to the introduction to the letter. But these verses are also closely related to the body of the letter that follows, as Paul introduces the theme he will develop in the following chapters. For many interpreters, that theme is enunciated in verse 17: ‘righteousness that is by faith.’ However, while this doctrine, as we will show, is critical to Paul’s argument in Romans, it is not the overarching theme. For this theme, we need to look at the word that heads these two verses: *gospel* ... Why is [Paul] not ashamed? Because he knows the gospel he preaches is the divinely appointed means to bring salvation to the world. ‘Salvation’ (*soteria*; see also 10:1,10; 11:11; 13:11) and the verb ‘to save’ (*sozo*; 5:9,10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:9,13; 11:14,26) are important words in Romans. We sometimes use this language to describe conversion only (‘When were you saved?’), but Paul more often uses it to refer to final deliverance from sin and evil that will come to the believer at death or the Parousia (see esp. 5:9-10; 13:11). Announcing what will become a key note in this letter, Paul insists that the salvation available in the gospel is for *all* who believe (3:22; 4:11,16; 10:4,11-13; cf. 11:32; 16:26).”⁴

Point 2: All have sinned and earned death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23a).

“In verse 23 Paul harks back to the theme that there is no distinction with respect to sin. The emphasis again is on the word [*pantes*] and recalls the argument of Rom. 1:18–3:20. Even though the Jews were God’s covenant people, they could not exalt themselves above the Gentiles, for they too had sinned. All need God’s saving righteousness because all have violated his law ... Not only have all people sinned, but even believers presently lack the glory of God, which is an eschatological gift. Of course, believers will possess the glory of God fully only at the consummation of the age (Rom. 5:2; 8:18,21,30), but probably the tense of the verb does not bear this significance here. The present tense is probably gnomic, indicating that all people always fall short of God’s glory ... That which has been lost through Adam is being restored in Christ. But we must also hark back to the previous reference to the glory of God in 1:21, for this text and the parallel verb [*hēmarton*] in 3:23 remind us that human beings fail to glorify God.”⁵

“Death is earned, eternal life is purely gratuitous. In the clause, ‘the wages of sin is death,’ there are two thoughts: (1) that the death with which we are inflicted is no more and no less than what we have earned; (2) that death is the inevitable consequence of sin. Rectitude governs the payment of wages and we therefore receive exactly and inevitably what we owe.”⁶

Point 3: God provided Jesus as a substitute for sinners (Rom. 5:8; 6:23b).

“In the clause, ‘but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ the governing idea is that of God’s free grace in contrast with the notion of remuneration, and the magnitude of this free grace is emphasized by the nature of the gift bestowed.”⁷

Point 4: God reconciles and declares sinners righteous through Jesus (Rom. 5:9-11).

“Thus ‘at just the right time’ Christ died to save us not because we were good (5:7) but while we were still sinners who had fallen short of the standard God set for us (5:8) ... Christ’s death for sinners was unique even by the standards of Greco-Roman and Jewish culture ... Christ died for God’s enemies, the wicked. Christ’s blood made God’s enemies his friends. His death on the cross saves sinners from hell, the just punishment for their sins. Paul speaks of this in terms of *God’s wrath* (5:9), which here stands for future judgment (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). We are saved from this wrath by Christ’s *blood*, which represents his entire life (Gen. 9:5-6; Lev. 17:11). Although the cross was the climax, Christ gave his whole life to save sinners. Not only has Christ reconciled the ‘ungodly,’ that is, those who were not interested in knowing God, he has also reconciled God’s enemies, that is, those who are in active rebellion against him, who shake their fists at him (5:10). *Reconciliation* ends God’s enmity towards the forgiven sinner (5:11; see also 11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). The forgiven can now boast, ‘We belong to God!’”⁸

Point 5: God saves all who trust in Jesus (Rom. 10:9-13).

“What is now required is to respond in faith to the gospel message by confessing that Jesus is Lord and by believing that God raised him from the dead (10:8-9). That is all it takes. It is this belief and this confession that bring salvation (10:10; see also Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11) ... *Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame* (10:11). That is how available the gospel is to both Jews and Gentiles (10:12-13). Paul quotes a familiar passage from Joel 2:32, making the point that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. While Joel was speaking only to Jews, his words now also apply to Gentiles. Accepting Christ is the factor that unites people of all backgrounds.”⁹

References

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