I. Introduction

Read Romans 16

Today:

1) come to end of our journey in Romans

Ch. 16: Not spend much time in chapter 16

Think back over Romans as a whole

= As a way to remember

2) Communion Sunday

A perfect way to reflect on and celebrate the good news that Paul lays out in romans

Time different: Centered around communion

Usually preach a sermon and tack on communion

Whole thing is communion. Communion is the sermon

Hear good news, see, taste, touch through communion

= as a way to remember

Brilliant Master Teacher.

Gave us something to remember him

Knows how easily we forget

What would you do if want to be remembered

Ted

pictures

Essentially that’s what jesus does, picture

Brilliant, salvation is complicated: righteousness, justification, substitution

Simplifies: takes something so basic, human, we do

Eating bread, drinking wine, transforms it into a powerful reminder of him

Command, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

Today goal; fix our eyes on jesus

to remember, who is and what he did

through communion and through a review of romans

Non-Christians don’t participate

Break into two parts today.

Cross: Vertical beam and Horizontal (reconciles us to God and to each other—family )

Romans: Vertical and horizontal

I. Start with the cup, blood: Vertical dimension: blood of Christ. Reconciles us to God

A. The Unrighteous/Irreligious way to live: = the SELF

1. Issue: 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened

They intuitively knew there was a creator

Issue: CONTROL/INDEPENDENCE/FREEDOM

I don’t want to have to acknowledge a CREATOR who I’m accountable to

I want INDEPENDENCE: live life way I want live, make own decisions

Read newspaper, watch movies

2. Problem: 1:24: Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts 1:26: God gave them over to shameful lusts 1:28-29: he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

-these things become our gods: $, sex, approval/recognition

-We thought FREEDOM but slavery to very things we pursue

We cut ourselves off from God: who designed us, knows what’s best for us as humans

face his judgment

3. We all can relate to some aspect of that

Control/indendence, yet experience the consequences (anxiety, etc.)

B. The Self-righteous/religious

1. 2:1: you who pass judgment on someone else

Jews of Paul’s day: Religious people

We know there’s a God

Not going to go running around in rampant immorality

We’re going to live moral upright lives before him

ISSUE: intuitively knows broken and messy: feel inadequacy

Maybe if try hard enough, I can clean myself up for God, relieve that inadequacy

Pursue religion: follow rules, read bible, go to church, $ as way of relieving

2. Problem: 3:20: Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Problem: Never be good enough for God

an endless treadmill of religion, never be good enough

3. We can relate

Trying so hard to be good enough, Trying so hard to please God, tired

Consider first two ways to live: unrighteous and self righteous (irreligious and religious)

-Look very different on outside

-One huge similarity: = SELF

Both are fundamentally self-centered views of life

Whether I have turned my back on God and living for my SELF independence

or turned to religion, trying to clean myself up, in power of my SELF

both hopeless, destined to fail, end in death/separation

3:22-23: There is no difference,for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

A. Third way: NOT unrighteous or self-righteous, not irreligious or religious

= GOSPEL. God’s way. The way of the cross. Jesus Christ is at center of everything

1. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

2. HEART OF GOSPEL: God presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement,﻿ ﻿through faith in his blood.

a. On cross = Sacrifice of atonement

God like perfectly just judge

Holiness/justice requires that sin be dealt/paid, punishment fit the crime

Just punishment of sin = death, relational separation from him

Out of his love and mercy

Offers his own son in our place, as our substitute

He pays penalty for our sin, so that we can have forgivness/relationship

Heady, complicated, theology

Jesus in this meal keeps it simple

See this cup: this is a picture for you of what I’m going to do

Going to go to cross and pour out my blood for you

Trust that the pouring out of my blood covers all your sin

Washes you clean, makes you right with God

3. 8:1: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Not: “there is less condemnation,” or “almost no condemnation”

God’s condemnation has been carried out on Jesus

4. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we﻿ have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

Peace

Grace

FAITH: can’t do anything to earn it, simply receive it as a gift from God

This is what makes this so different from the other two ways

Utterly God centered:

It’s all God from start to finish;

5. Paul’s Doxology: That’s why Paul ends the way he does

Pass out the cup: Call up ushers and Scott

-time of confession (way # 1, way # 2)

-instrumental

Congregational Confession

Drinking the Cup

You have in your hands a cup of red juice

1. Remember you are loved more than you can possibly imagine

Loved by someone who would give anything to be with you, even life

Loved through and through, when you’re good when you’re bad, when at your best and at your worst

Nothing in the universe can separate you from that love

2. Remember that you are forgiven through and through

This blood is payment enough for all your sin (past, present, future)

No condemnation

Invite you to return the simplicity of the good news

That you can remain a sinner just as you are; and be forgiven

Just receive it today!

Say the words of communion

“On the night he was betrayed Jesus took the cup and said

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. Drink this in remembrance of me.”

Sing: Amazing Love

(feel free to put cups under chair--collect at end)

III. Horizontal: reconciles us to each other (spend less time)

1. 12:4-5: Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so IN CHRIST we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

KEY

In Christ: Come in through the same door, faith in his sacrifice

I’m in Christ, you’re in Christ, we are part of his body

One Body:

Not just individuals who have all been saved

Brought into one family

We belong to one another

2. Commands:

12:10: be devoted to one another in brotherly love

12:16: Live in harmony with one another

14:1: Accept one another without passing judgment

14:19: Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification

3. Ch. 16

What stands out = relationships/greetings

Get this window into Paul’s actual life, web of relationships

1. Greetings to those in Rome: 3-16

Greets 26 individuals

Notable: Incredible diversity: Men/women, Jew and Gentile, slave/free, rich/poor

a. Men and Women

-surprising: Amount of women

-5 of them commended for their labor in the lord.

Played key role in the ministry of the early church

-Most prominent is Phoebe in v. 1-2 entrusted with this letter

She is probably a woman of some wealth has some business in Rome

b. Jews and Gentiles

Jews

1) v. 3: Priscilla and Aquila

wife-and-husband missionary team. Jews.

2) v. 7 Andronicus and Junias: Jewish

Mostly Gentile names

Yet: here you have them living together, serving together (staggering)

c. Slave and free, rich and poor

Moo: The list of names in this section does not make very interesting reading for most students of Romans. But for those few who are especially interested in the socioeconomic composition of the early church, it is a gold mind. For there was a tendency in the ancient world to give certain names to certain kinds of people; for example, wealthy people high on the social ladder would give their children certain names; slaves or former slaves would use (or be made to use) others.

Yet living as One Body: Christ reconciles us to each other

2. v. 21-24: Passing on Greetings from those with him in Corinth

Fellow workers

Timothy, etc: working side by side

Interesting picture of Paul’s actual life emerges.

Easy to think of him as this lone ranger pioneer evangelist

Reality; very relational, connected. Dependent on others, working with

I love: Romans which is so theological: ends with beautiful web of relationships

This is what Jesus Christ does,

Through his death on the cross,

he draws very diverse people together into one body

He not only reconciles us to God so that we our his children

He reconciles us to each other so that we are brothers and sisters in God’s family

And at communion

he gathers us around a table for a family meal

not just with him but also with each other

Paul in 1 Cor tells us that communion is a reminder that we are one body in Christ

10:17: Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf

So today: 1 loaf of bread up here

Want us all to partake of this one loaf

(truth is going to sneak some other loaves, but let’s pretend)

Words of communion (RIP BREAD)

“on night betrayed, took bread and broke it, this is my body, it’s broken for you. Eat this in remembrance of me.”

Pass out bread (explain the process)

Invite you to simply watch the way this one loaf gets distributed to each of us

Take bread

You have a piece of bread, take a look at it

Take a look around you: all these people with pieces of bread.

1. Powerful reminder that we are one body: one loaf.

-our unity, all eating from the same loaf, same savior, same gift

2. Powerful reminder: to see one another the way God sees them

Jesus offered his life for them

Considered them so valuable, willing to give everything for them

as quirky, goofy, messy, dysfunctional as they are; Jesus died for them.

So valuable to him: should be valuable to us as well

So: We’ve all got this bread, Jesus has given himself to us

-“I have given my life for you. Now this is my command: love each other. The world will know you’re my disciples by this.”

IV. Pass the peace

“Peace be with you” “and also with you”

Tangible reminder to each other: peace with God and peace with each other (through X)

-sometimes need to hear it from someone else

Take a minute

Greet each other with a holy kiss

Greet each other with holy handshake, holy hug

V. Singing (collect the cups)