

When Augustine Read Romans

I. Introduction

A. When the Apostle Paul Wrote Romans

1. Jewish Christians were expelled with the Jews by Claudius in 56-57AD - *Acts 18:1-4*
2. Gentile Christians were in need of encouragement, connection and leadership - *Romans 1:7*
3. Gentile Christians in Rome met in house churches - *Romans 16:1-27*
4. Paul wrote his letter to help direct and organize the Roman Church - *Romans 1:8-15*
5. Paul desired to go to Rome and then take the gospel to Spain - *Romans 15:23-29*
6. The Letter to the Romans is a theological witness to Jesus Christ
 - a. Chapters 1-8 deal with righteousness and sin
 - b. Chapters 9-11 deal with the Jewish people
 - c. Chapters 12-15 deal with practical faith living
 - d. Chapter 16 deals with congregational leadership

B. The Influence of Someone Else's Mail

1. Augustine read *Romans* - Peace with God - *Romans 5:1-19*
2. Luther translated *Romans* - Union with Christ - *Romans 5:20-6:23*
3. Wesley heard *Romans* - Freedom from the Law - *Romans 7:1-8:4*
4. Schweitzer lived *Romans*- Life in the Spirit - *Romans 8:5-39*

II. Peace with God - *Romans 5:1-19*

A. At Home with God - *Romans 5:1-2*

1. Peace - immediate effect of justification - which we have
2. Grace - continuing effect of justification - in which we stand
3. Glory - ultimate effect of justification - for which we hope

B. Content with Life - *Romans 5:3-11*

1. Suffering - produces perseverance, character, hope - **glory**
2. Assurance - comes from the sanctifying power of God - **Holy Spirit**
3. Sacrifice - proves how much God cares - **love**
4. Reconciliation - exchanges death for life through Christ - **salvation**

C. Made New in Jesus Christ - *Romans 5:12-19*

1. Between Adam and Moses - sin and death reigned in the world
2. Between Moses and Christ - law defined sin, righteousness and judgment
3. Between Christ and judgment - grace abounds as a gift from God

III. Augustine in the Park

Suddenly I heard a voice from a house nearby—perhaps a voice of some boy or girl, I do not know - singing over and over again, ‘Pick it up and read, pick it up and read.’ My expression immediately altered and I began to think hard whether children ordinarily repeated a ditty like this in any sort of name, but I could not recall ever having heard it anywhere else. I stemmed the flood of tears and rose to my feet, believing that this could be nothing other than a divine command to open the Book and read the first passage I chanced upon.... Stung into action, I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting, for on leaving it I had put down there the Book of the apostle's letters. I snatched it up, opened it and in dread in silence the passage of which my eyes first lighted: *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*” [*Romans 13:13-14*]

From *Confessions*

When Luther Translated Romans

I. Church History

A. From Augustine to Martin Luther

1. Augustine lays the foundations of Western Theology *ie The City of God* d.430AD
2. Bishop Leo (Pope) preserves Rome from Attila the Hun in 452AD
3. Patrick evangelizes Britain and Ireland - d.461AD
4. The Church splits into East and West in 1054AD
5. Francis of Assisi and others try to reform the Roman Church - d.1226AD
6. The Roman Church sends armies to “invade” the Holy Land - 1070-1260AD
7. European Christianity falls into political and moral chaos - 1517-1648AD

B. Other Reformers Who Read Romans

1. John Wyclif (1320-1384) - stressed spiritual freedom in God's Word
2. John Hus (1369-1415) - viewed Jesus Christ as the head of the Church
3. Ulrich Zwingli (1404-1531) - followed the Bible for faith and life
4. Menno Simons (1496-1561) - preached the Gospel of peace
5. John Calvin (1509-1574) - defended the rights of Protestant Christians
6. John Knox (1513-1572) - structured a church and government upon God's law

Union with Christ

A. Paradoxes of Holy Living *Romans 5:20-6:14*

Sin/Grace - Where sin abounds, grace abounds more

Death/Resurrection - Buried with Christ, rise with Christ

Crucifixion/Baptism - Old self dies, new self lives

Dying/Living - If we die with Christ, we live with Christ

Law/Freedom - Not under law, but under grace

B. The Exclusive Possession *Romans 6:15-22*

Shall we sin?

- a. By no means - we are under grace, but grace is costly
- b. By no means - we have experienced the love of God
2. *Do you know when you offer yourself you must obey?*
 - a. We used to offer ourselves to sin which leads to death
We now offer ourselves to God which leads to righteousness
We have been set free from sin and embrace righteousness
3. *What benefit did you reap from your shameful life?*

We reaped sin upon sin leading to death
We now reap righteousness which is leading to holiness and eternal life

Luther in the Pulpit

He who fears death more than Christ and loves life more than Christ, does not yet possess Christ by faith. Sin still has dominion over him and he is under the Law, as Christ explains this in *John 2:25*: “He that loveth his life shall lose it”; in *Matthew 10:37*: “He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me”; and in *Matthew 10:38*: “He that taketh not his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.” It is not easy to overcome sin, and if the Lord were not with us, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able” (*I Cor. 10:13*), the flood would swallow us up. While He permits the wicked to be tempted and to fall, He is faithful to all who stand in the faith and call upon Him. *From Luther's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*

SOMEBODY'S GOT MAIL SERIES

When Wesley Heard Romans

I. The Life of John Wesley

A. Before Aldersgate

1. Born on June 17, 1703, in Epworth, England
2. Raised in a Church of England (Anglican) parsonage by Rev. Samuel and Susanna Wesley
3. Attended Oxford in 1720 and ordained in 1725
4. Organized a “holy club” in 1725 - called “Methodists” for their methodized aspirations
5. Left for Georgia in 1735 to become a missionary priest
6. Returned to England in 1737 after a disastrous love affair with Sophy Hopkey
7. Met Peter Bohler who shared the “instantaneous gift of faith”

B. After Aldersgate

1. Went to a Moravian meeting at Aldersgate Street in London on May 24, 1738
2. Heard Luther’s comments on *Romans* and felt his heart strangely warmed
3. Traveled to Herrnhut in August 1738 to visit the Moravian church planters
4. Encouraged to preach in the streets and fields by George Whitefield
5. Engaged class meetings, preaching houses, lay ministers and circuit riders
6. Helped people experience a vitalizing faith in God’s forgiving love
7. Endured oppositions, disruptions and persecutions from religious and non-religious alike
8. Proclaimed the active reception of God’s love through the means of grace
9. Wrote to William Wilberforce about slavery before his death on March 2, 1791

II. Freedom from the Law

A. Responses to the Law of God

1. Legalism—bound to the law and under the bondage of work
2. Antinomianism - rejects the law altogether and blames the law for guilt
3. Christianity - lives by faith in obedience to the law

B. Grace Living - *Romans 7:1-8:3*

1. The law no longer exercised lordship over us - live by the Spirit - vv.1-6
2. The law reveals our sin nature - vv.1-13
3. The law is spiritual and produces a conflict with our flesh - vv.14-25
4. The law is superseded by the Spirit of Christ in us - *Romans 8:1-3*
 - a. In Christ there is no condemnation - First Blessing
 - b. In Christ there is freedom - Second Blessing - *Romans 8:4*

C. Holiness - *Romans 8:4*

1. The purpose of Christ’s incarnation and death is to make us holy
2. The righteous requirement of the law is holy living
3. The Holy Spirit in us and through us is the way of holy living

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he has taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.

—John Wesley’s Journal p.103

SOMEBODY’S GOT MAIL SERIES

When Schweitzer Lived Romans

Men’s Ministries International

I. The Life of Albert Schweitzer

A. Before Africa

1. Born on January 14, 1875 in Haute Alsace (between France and Germany)
2. Studied theology, philosophy and music at the University of Strasburg
3. Wrote his thesis on "The Last Supper" - from the view of the disciples
4. Appointed as a pastor at St. Nicholas Church (Lutheran) at Strasburg in 1897
5. Taught theology at the Protestant Theological Seminary in Strasburg in 1903
6. Decided to devote his life to medical missions in Africa
7. Studied medicine from 1906 to 1913
8. Married Helene Bresslau in 1912 and leaves for Africa in 1913

B. African Missions

1. Worked for the Paris Missionary Society while in Africa
2. Opened a hospital in Lambarene, West Africa
3. Interned during World War I as an enemy alien
4. Had a revelation during a journey up the Ogawe River - "reverence for life"
5. Returned to Europe for lectures, concerts and books
6. Returned to Africa 12 times from 1924 to 1956
7. Received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 - used the money to build another hospital
8. Died in Lambarene in 1965

II. Life In the Spirit

A. The Holy Spirit subdues our flesh - *Romans 8:5-13*

1. Sinful nature leads the mind to death - hostile to God
2. Spirit nature leads the mind to life - pleasing to God
3. As a person thinks, so he/she acts - *Proverbs 23:7*

B. The Holy Spirit witnesses our sonship - *Romans 8:14-17*

1. Access to God and to the fellowship of the family
2. Access to the Kingdom - suffering and glory

C. The Holy Spirit guarantees our inheritance - *Romans 8:18-25*

1. We have not yet received our final adoption as sons
2. We have not yet received the redemption of our bodies
3. We have received the Holy Spirit - a foretaste of glory
4. We have a hope that leads to patient endurance

D. The Holy Spirit helps us in us in weaknesses and in prayers - *Romans 8:26-27*

1. We are all weak in mind, body and soul - God helps
2. We are all weak in understanding, wisdom, discernment and direction - God leads

E. The Holy Spirit affirms our faith journey - *Romans 8:28-30*

1. God foreknew - the sinful state of humanity
2. God predestined - the image of His son Jesus Christ
3. God called - the sons and daughters back home
4. God justified - those who respond by faith
5. God glorified - those who receive the Holy Spirit

III. Schweitzer Living in Africa

In the Epistle to the Romans Paul develops his mysticism and his ethics side by side. And in this exposition the unity of active and passive ethics is admirably shown. For the only profound ethic is one which is able, on the basis of one and the same conception, to give an ethical interpretation to all that a man experiences and suffers as well as to all that he does.