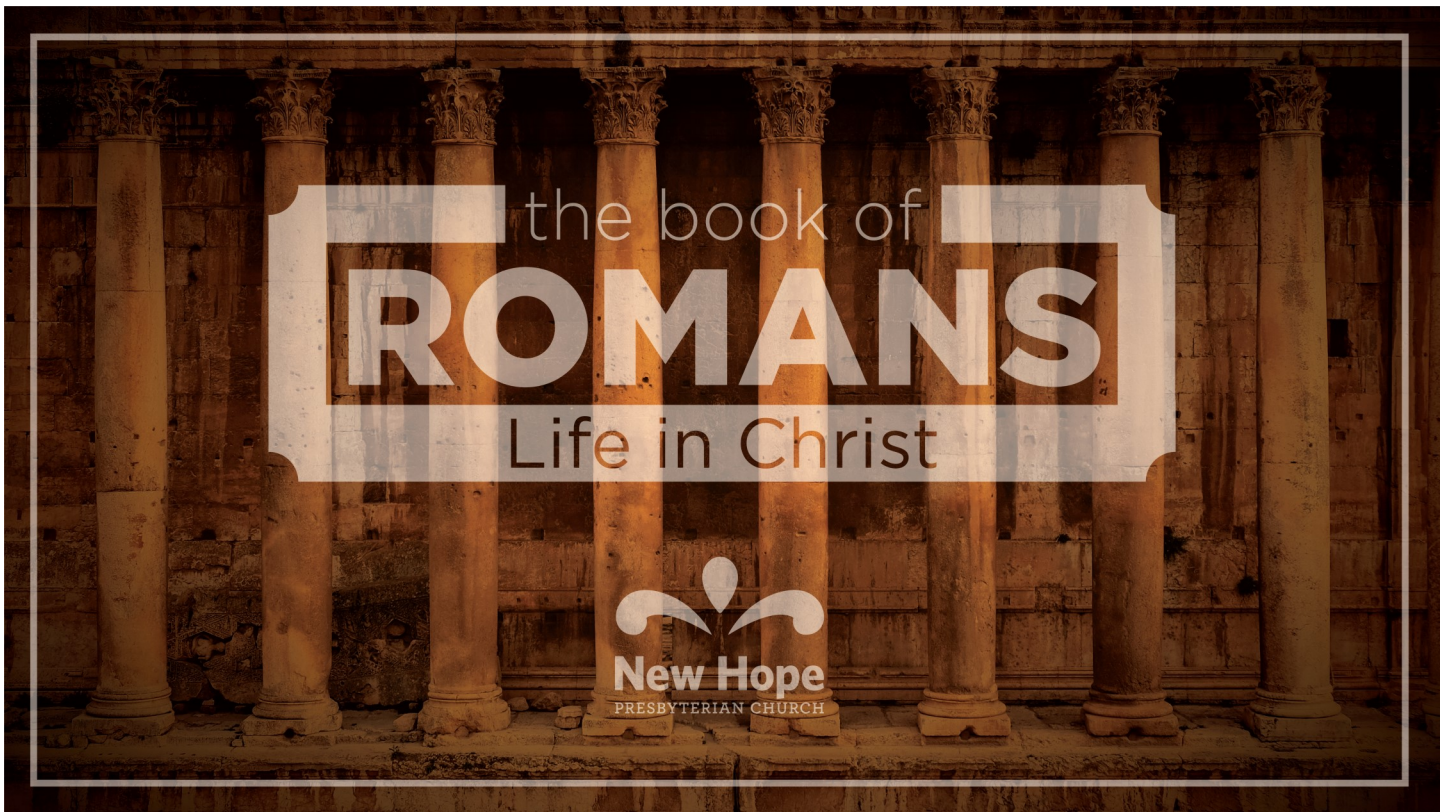




Romans: Life in Christ Study Guide

The Rescue

October 24, 2021

Romans 7:14-25

14For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. 15I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

1. Chapter seven is regarded as one of the most difficult chapters in Romans to interpret. Part of the challenge is found in the last paragraph, our text for the week (vs.14-25). Is this an autobiographical paragraph for Paul? That is, is he the “I” of the paragraph, or is the “I” a reference to anyone who is reading the letter? And more importantly, does this paragraph describe a person before he or she knows Christ (receives justification) or after he or she has become a Christ follower? Scholars are split over this last question.

2. The word “flesh” is used a few times in this paragraph. “Flesh” refers to a life lived apart from, or in resistance to, the renewing work of God’s Spirit.

3. As you read the paragraph again, how do his words resonate with you? Can you relate to the struggles with sin that Paul writes about? How so?
4. What are signs in our world today that sin is no longer something to be overly concerned about? What would Paul say to that?
5. Who is our “rescue” from a “slavery to sin”? Chapter 8 will describe a life rescued from this slavery.

Reflections on Romans

Last Sunday, Erin Fager quoted Bible scholar, Dale Bruner, in describing hand motions that help us define what *justification* and *sanctification* are about. As we’ve said, *justification* is God’s work to make right our relationship with him through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Justification starts us on the journey of *sanctification* which is the Spirit’s work of transforming us into Christlikeness. Bruner, using hands, describes these faith vocabulary words this way:

“In justification, *we open our hands, palms upward*, in simple faith, to receive God’s favor of righteousness. In sanctification, *we extend our hands, palms outward*, in willing service of the Father to the needy world around us (and, as often, *palms vertical*, in faithful resistance to sin all around us). Paul will teach us, especially in Romans 8, that the Holy Spirit will continually enable, equip, and encourage us in these new hand-extensions of Sanctification-Service *and* Sanctification-Resistance.”

From *The Letter to the Romans*, p.87, by Dale Bruner

Next week: Romans 8