

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz production  
Week 33  
Romans 1-6

This next part of the New Testament that we are going into are letters written by the apostle Paul to a specific group of people. At this point Paul has not been to Rome to preach but the message of the gospel has spread and there is a church established there. Paul will go to Rome soon but it will be there as a prisoner. Paul was bold and powerful in his messages, but they weren't always easy to understand. But that's ok because we are in good company, even Peter said the same thing. So if it was hard for Peter the apostle to understand some of Paul's writings then we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

The first few chapters in Romans are written first to those outside the church. Then written to those inside the church and then in chapter 3 to everyone. Paul's style of writing is called persuasive writing. It is full of rhetorical questions that are meant to elicit inward reflection. And it is kind of doom and gloom at first, for example:

**10** As it is written, There is **none righteous**, no, not one:

**11** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

**12** They are all gone out of the **way**, they are together become **unprofitable**; there is none that doeth **good**, no, not one.

**13** Their **throat** *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the **poison** of asps *is* under their lips: (asps is a snake)

**14** Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and **bitterness**:

**15** Their feet *are* swift to **shed** blood:

**16** Destruction and **misery** *are* in their ways:

**17** And the way of **peace** have they not known:

**18** There is no **fear** of God before their eyes.

**19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every **mouth** may be stopped, and all the world may become **guilty** before God.

**20** Therefore by the **deeds** of the **law** there shall no flesh be **justified** in his sight: for **by** the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

**21** But now the **righteousness** of God **without** the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

**22** Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

**23** For all have **sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;

(Romans 3:10-23)

Now before you get too depressed please know that there is hope coming. But these verses don't give us much. Paul sums up all these verses in the last line that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Now, we know that. We have heard that verse many times. But we tend to brush over it and agree quickly without truly understanding its meaning. What I mean by that is; What is the glory of God that this verse is referring to, or in general, what is the glory of God? See, when we look at that verse we assume that God is righteous and we are not and therefore we can not come before the throne of God because we are sinners. His glory being his presents. But.... God defined His glory differently.

When Moses was talking with God face to face in the tabernacle Moses asked God to show him His glory. To which God replies:

“I will make all my **goodness** pass before thee, and I will **proclaim** the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew **mercy** on whom I will shew mercy.  
(Ex 33:18-19)

So according to God's definition: His glory is His “goodness” stating that He will be gracious and merciful to those whom He chooses.

Well, that really changes this verse we have been looking at. Let's relook at it and replace the word glory with goodness.

“For all have **sinned**, and come short of the **[goodness]** of God” (Romans 3:23)

To me this makes a lot more sense, because as we go through life we sometimes don't understand why things happen. Good or bad, most believe that it's just fate. When in reality; it is us that chooses how close or far we are from our loving Father. What I mean by that is if someone chooses not to believe in God to ignore His existence what obligation does God have to bless that person? The obvious answer is none. Now, God may choose to show forth mercy as he did in the case of Paul. But it was nothing that Paul did to earn God's mercy or blessings. Paul knew, and said many times that he was the worst of the worst. In his letter to Timothy he said:

“The **grace** of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

**15** This *is* a faithful **saying**, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to **save sinners**; of whom I am chief.”  
(1 Timothy 1:14-15)

This proves that the glory of God, the goodness of God that we receive has less to do with what we do and more to do with who we are. And who we are will then dictate how we act. Jesus taught this again and again when the Pharisees would preach the law and obey the law perfectly yet were far from the glory of God because of their pride.

Who we are is so much more important than what we do. And who we are to become starts with true repentance. Brother Stephen Owen in a recent general conference said this:

“Sometimes the journey will seem long—after all, it is the journey toward eternal life. But it can be a joyous journey if we pursue it with faith in Jesus Christ and hope in His Atonement. I testify that the moment we set foot on the path of repentance, we invite the Savior’s redeeming power into our lives. That power will steady our feet, expand our vision, and deepen our resolve to keep moving forward, step by step”

He also said:

Too often we think of repentance as something miserable and depressing. But God’s plan is the plan of happiness, not the plan of misery! Repentance is uplifting and ennobling. It’s sin that brings unhappiness.<sup>2</sup> Repentance is our escape route! As Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained: “Without repentance, there is no real progress or improvement in life. . . . Only through repentance do we gain access to the atoning grace of Jesus Christ and salvation. Repentance . . . points us to freedom, confidence, and peace.”<sup>3</sup> My message to all—especially to the youth—is that repentance is always positive.

When we speak of repentance, we aren’t just talking about self-improvement efforts. True repentance is more than that—it is inspired by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His power to forgive our sins. As Elder Dale G. Renlund has taught us, “Without the Redeemer, . . . repentance becomes simply miserable behavior modification.”<sup>4</sup> We can try to change our behavior on our own, but only the Savior can remove our stains and lift our burdens, enabling us to pursue the path of obedience with confidence and strength. The joy of repentance is more than the joy of living a decent life. It’s the joy of forgiveness, of being clean again, and of drawing closer to God. Once you’ve experienced that joy, no lesser substitute will do.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2017/10/repentance-is-always-positive?lang=eng>

Repentance is a joyful process. Hard, at times painful process that has the best, most joyful results. But, may I point out something that is oftentimes overlooked? We have become good of repenting of our sins, those acts in defiance with God's will. We have had a lot of practice doing it and thankfully God is patient with us. But there is a sin that most of us have not even recognized in ourselves. The adversary has become so good and convincing us that we don't have it, but it is so easily recognizable in others. President Benson calls it “the universal sin”, the

universal sin of Pride. Like we mentioned before it is less about what you do and more about who you are. And who we are is a prideful people.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475/beware-of-pride?lang=eng>

If we as a people could pull out pride by the roots and eliminate it from our lives there is nothing that could keep the windows of heaven from showering down blessings on the entire world. If we want “world peace” , pride is the most important sin to give up, and the only attribute that can replace it is humility. C.S. Lewis said “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”

President Uchtdorf identifies pride as our judgment of others, he said:

“This topic of judging others could actually be taught in a two-word sermon. When it comes to hating, gossiping, ignoring, ridiculing, holding grudges, or wanting to cause harm, please apply the following:

Stop it!

It’s that simple. We simply have to stop judging others and replace judgmental thoughts and feelings with a heart full of love for God and His children. God is our Father. We are His children. We are all brothers and sisters. I don’t know exactly how to articulate this point of *not judging others* with sufficient eloquence, passion, and persuasion to make it stick. I can quote scripture, I can try to expound doctrine, and I will even quote a bumper sticker I recently saw. It was attached to the back of a car whose driver appeared to be a little rough around the edges, but the words on the sticker taught an insightful lesson. It read, “Don’t judge me because I sin differently than you.”

We must recognize that we are all imperfect—that we are beggars before God. Haven’t we all, at one time or another, meekly approached the mercy seat and pleaded for grace? Haven’t we wished with all the energy of our souls for mercy—to be forgiven for the mistakes we have made and the sins we have committed?”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/04/the-merciful-obtain-mercy?lang=eng>

Which is exactly what Paul was teaching the Romans, “We are all sinners that have come short of the glory of God”. But here is the point to all of this. Notice the next few verses to follow this statement:

**24** Being justified freely by his **grace** through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus:  
**25** Whom God hath **set forth to be** a **propitiation** through faith in his **blood**, to declare his righteousness for the **remission** of sins that are past, through the **forbearance** of God;  
**26** To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be **just**, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:24-26)

And there is the key; faith in and though the holy Messiah, Jesus Christ.

I heard people say that when they go to heaven, they have some questions they would like to ask God. But as a wise man once said: “Never approach the throne of God, without Jesus Christ by your side”.

He is our advocate with the Father. The reason we have any hope of being with the Father again. Might we give all glory to him. And see His role in the salvation of our souls.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.