

The Roman Road to Salvation: Introduction

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- [0 : 00] All right, you guys all know what book we're in, right? Please turn with me to Romans chapter 1. So this morning is kind of an introduction to the introduction.
- How does that sound? And I'm excited. I'll be honest with you. If you ask any pastor about preaching the book of Romans, it ends up being a little bit of a daunting task.
- There has actually been more quality commentaries written on the book of Romans than any of other Paul's other epistles. In fact, I would say I own just about every one of the modern ones and several of the older ones.
- And I can tell you right now, it would actually be impossible for me to read every page and every commentary for a week-by-week sermon series. As an example, just getting into this topic, I set aside the six best commentaries, looking at the top seven verses, and there's over 100,000 words written, which is about 400 pages depending what font size you use.
- And that's only with the first six commentaries. There's another 14 to go. So, not only do I have over 40 commentaries on this section, I also have Martin Lloyd's commentary section on this subject.
- [1 : 28] If you do not know who Martin Lloyd-Jones is, he actually has 14 commentaries alone on the book of Romans that he read, or wrote.
- Now, who is Martin Lloyd-Jones, you may ask? Martin Lloyd-Jones was a Welsh preacher who preached in Westminster Chapel at the heart of the city of London.
- And he began in 1939, and he preached until 1968, but he began his commentary on, or his sermon series on the book of Romans in 1955.
- And he actually preached it until he retired in 1968. Over 366 sermons over that 14-year period.
- What's interesting is he didn't finish Romans. He stopped at Romans 14-17. And let me just read to you what Romans 14-17 says, and it kind of introduces you to a heart of an incredible man, an incredible pastor, who is being completely honest with himself and with his congregation.
- [2 : 51] 14-17 says, For the righteousness for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- His confession was he wasn't sure what the joy of the Holy Spirit was. Therefore, he felt it was dishonest to continue in that series.
- If you're familiar with John Piper, he preached over 225 sermons over an eight-year period on what he calls the most favorite book of the New Testament for him.
- John MacArthur preached 217 sermons in a series that lasted over five years. The question is, Why do these pastors take so long to preach this book, which is the 16 simple chapters?
- Why so long do they spend so much time in this book? Well, if you're aware of church history, you would know why.

[4 : 02] In fact, more of the great revivals, if not all of the great revivals of church history, are directly related to this book of Romans that we are going to be learning from.

In 386 A.D. There was a church man, but before he was a church man, he was a pagan man by his own words.

His name was Augustine. And he is one of the most earliest, the most prominent church fathers. He found himself in a garden visiting his friend, and he was weeping over the wickedness of his life.

He just could not understand why he tried to do good Can I get someone to grab me a glass of water, please?

Thanks. Thanks. thank you Carl not at all thought I had beaten this voice thing but not yet so Augustine is sitting in his friend's garden he's lamenting the wickedness of his life and he's saying how come I try so hard to do good but why do I go back to the evil that I know that is evil and he said as he was weeping and lamenting this aspect of his life he heard a young boy singing in Latin saying take up and read take up and read it was an old song and before him was the scroll of Romans so he picked it up at the first passage that caught his eye he read from Romans 13 and he said let us walk properly as in the daytime Paul wrote not in orgies and drunkenness not in sexual immorality or sensuality nor in quarreling and jealousy but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its nature see Augustine had been enslaved by meeting the gratification of his flesh

[6 : 49] Augustine would later write no further would I read nor did I need for instantly as the sentence ended by a light as it were a security infused into my heart all the gloom of doubt vanished away and thus there he became a Christian and became one of the most significant theologians and leaders of the early Christian church but a thousand years later the book of Romans was at the forefront of the Protestant Reformation as you know Martin Luther ironically enough was a monk of the Augustinian order he was teaching at the University of Wittenberg and he was teaching the book of Romans and he writes the following he says I greatly long to understand Paul's epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but this one expression the righteousness of God he goes because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous he goes night and day I pondered until I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby through grace and sheer mercy

God justifies us by faith alone he says there there upon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise the whole of scripture took on a new meaning and whereas before the righteousness of God had filled me with hate now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love the passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven and thus he began to question the Roman Catholic Church and God would use him at that time to begin the Protestant Reformation the great reformer John Calvin wrote when anyone gains a knowledge of this epistle he has an entrance an entrance open to him to all the most hidden treasures of scripture scripture if these words aren't enough to spurn us and to encourage us to dig into

God's word to understand this book of Romans I don't know what more could even William Tyndale the 16th century Bible translator the man who fought so hard to get the Bible written in English so his people could understand God's word in their own language wrote he says for as much as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament and most pure evangelion and he says that is to say glad tidings that you and I call the gospel and also a light and a way into the whole scripture I think it that every Christian man and woman not only know it but memorize it without the book but also exercise himself therefore evermore continually as with the daily bread of the soul no one can verily read it too often study it too well for the more it is studied the easier it is the more it is chewed the pleasanter it is and the more groundly it is searched the precious things are found in it so great treasure of spiritual things lie hidden therein it has been said that

Romans will delight the greatest logician captivate the mind of the consummate genius yet it will bring tears to the humblest soul refreshment to the simplest mind it will knock you down and lift you up it will strip you naked and then clothes you with eternal elegance if you've ever read Paul Bunyan's great pilgrim's progress you'll know as one author stated it was Romans that turned Bunyan into a spiritual giant and a literary master so what makes Romans so valuable we all know that the Bible is valuable every word has been breathed by the breath of God but as this longest epistle in the New Testament it probably has the most to say it engages the Old Testament so during this time and I don't know how long we will be here we will be engaging the Old

Testament as Paul argues quite convincingly of how gospel works in the Old Testament into the New Testament but perhaps more than any other book written the book of Romans answers some of man's greatest questions let me take a minute here to tell you the questions that it will answer for you ask yourself are these some of the questions that you have about life it will answer the question what is the good news of God it will answer the question is Jesus really God it answers the question how could God send people to hell what does it mean to reject God and his son Jesus Christ why are there false religions and idols what is man's biggest sins why are there sexual perversions hatred crime dishonesty and all other types of evils in the world and why are they so pervasive and rampant what is the standard that

[13 : 12] God uses to condemn people how can a person who's never heard the gospel be held spiritually responsible can a person keep God's law perfectly how can a person know he is a sinner how can a sinner be forgiven and justified by God what is the importance of Christ's death what is the importance of his resurrection what is the importance of this present life what is the importance of Jesus' present life in heaven for who did God die Christ die for how are we all related spiritually to Adam and how are all believers related spiritually to Jesus Christ and more importantly it answers the simple question how does a person die spiritually and become reborn what is the

Christian relation to sin why do I struggle with my sin why is living a faithful Christian life such a struggle how does the Holy Spirit work for a believer why is there suffering will this world ever be different can anybody relate to any of those questions in any sort of way incredible isn't it that all those books of life it even simply answers the question how can Christians pray properly how secure can a believer salvation be what is God's present plan for Israel what is God's future plan for Israel what is true spiritual commitment now like I said if you've had any of these questions about the

Christian life or just about life itself this book this study is for you so each one of these sermons I'm going to try to put together a list of questions for you to consider but I want you to make a promise with me this summer I want you to make a commitment that during this season you will take the time to read the book of Romans one of the things that I've been doing daily is just using an audio book just have Romans read to me and it's kind of interesting sometimes you kind of get lost through the forest the trees you're trying to understand everything but I find if is giving and it's not something I do one it's something that I do every day just over and over and over just continually listening so that I may understand it better to teach you my former pastor said about this book he says Romans speaks to us today just as powerfully as it spoke to men of the first century it speaks morally about adultery fornication homosexuality hating murder lying and civil disobedience it speaks intellectually telling us that the natural man is confused because he has a reprobate mind it speaks socially telling us how we are to relate to one another it speaks psychologically telling us where true freedom comes to deliver men from the burden of guilt speaks nationally telling us our responsibility to human government speaks internationally telling us the ultimate destiny of the earth and especially the future of

Israel it speaks spiritually answering man's despair by offering hope for the future it speaks theologically teaching us the relationship between the flesh and the spirit between law and grace between works and faith but most of all it profoundly brings God himself to us amen how's that for an introduction is that long enough for you all right let's take a look at the very first verse of Romans 1:1 it says Paul a servant of Christ Jesus called to be an apostle set apart for the gospel of God what's interesting about the book of Romans is his introduction to himself and to the people is quite different than any of the letters that he has written either previously or after in this introduction there is a loaded discourse of information that we're going to unpack about the reason why but

I want you to notice three aspects to this first verse notice the three defining terms that Paul uses for himself first of all he calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ if you've been here long enough you've heard me speak to the idea of being a servant the Greek word is actually used *doulos* which we understand to mean that he is simply saying that he is a slave of Jesus Christ he's not just a servant that can check in hey I've done my eight hours I'm going home I get my holidays off and praise the Lord for vacations in Squamish no he doesn't he simply says I am a slave of Christ Jesus everything I do is I do for my master the second aspect he says he is called to be an apostle there's a significance there that he's speaking to and the third aspect he's set apart for the gospel so so this am

[19:22] I want to answer the simple question how did Paul become a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ how did Paul become a slave of Jesus Christ I don't know how understanding the great impact that the Bible has perhaps you're a new Christian you haven't been taught these things so this morning I thought I would share with you the testimony of Paul the testimony of actually Saul how it began what is the significance because not only is the book of Romans such an incredible book that God called almost a specific special man in all of history to write this book for us and for the church and what I do is I'm going to show you a couple of maps and Dave has these maps fired up we're going to look at a first map now this is can we pull back on that a little bit

I guess that's okay that essentially is the biblical world that we're looking at everything that happens in the New Testament happens in this geographical standpoint and if you don't know what we're looking at I want you to write your grade school teachers and say thank you for not teaching me geography properly enough it's the Mediterranean ocean right the Mediterranean sea what we see on the far right hand side is where Israel is and we see where the boot is Italy so right where it says the three taverns is actually the place where Christians met just outside of Rome that's where we believe that the Roman church so that's the whole encompassing part of the Bible that's the biblical world that we are looking at there now I want you to look at map number two here if you notice at the top right hand part and I brought a pointer and I somehow oh there it is it's good to shake things around right all right this is

Tarsus this is where Paul so here we got Israel Nazareth Jesus right Mount of Olives is where Jerusalem is but this is where Tarsus this is where the apostle Paul was born now if you're familiar with modern day geography that is modern day Turkey today if you notice as well there's major trade routes that flow you can't really see on the map but they would have been a port so we're going to learn that Antioch that city is going to become very familiar to us as well as Antioch but Tarsus was actually a center of Greek learning and culture and it was actually home to three of the most outstanding universities in the Roman Empire we believe that Paul received his training there and then when he became 13 years of age he was sent to Jerusalem to continue his studies in Judaism so it's kind of interesting that

Paul was born into the best situation possible he was born as a Roman citizen because of his father and his father was a tent maker and if you're familiar with Rome or with Paul you'll understand that Paul was a tent maker and he learned this from his father and it was a skill that he used throughout his ministry Paul had access to a Greek education and then when he was sent down to Jerusalem he studied under a man named Gamaliel now Gamaliel was a pretty famous Jewish rabbi but his grandfather was named by Hillel was actually the most famous rabbi teacher of the time so that Paul was growing up with such stature and knowledge that his family taught sent him to be trained by the best you with me on this he's not going to some second hand third hand type of university this guy's going

UBC can I say that like if you guys went to Trinity or Simon Fraser sorry anyhow at that time it really mattered where you studied right so he's sending him to get the best education possible under Gamaliel Saul would have memorized and learned to interpret scripture according to rabbinical tradition now I want you to understand what God is doing here when you look at all the other apostles did they have any education pretty much nothing right they probably would have had a little something they would have studied as young children you know right in the local synagogues right but they and when we look at who Jesus Christ calls you would have almost expected that all the people that God would have called it would have been all these type of

[24 : 37] Paul's right it would have been Paul's these all these great incredible men of stature of education of learning because Jesus Christ obviously has the most important message and here's the funny rub with Paul we're going to get into this God does not call Paul to minister to the Jews where his education would have meant the world God called him to minister to the Gentiles and in case I offend the barbarians where his education means nothing it's incredible how God works isn't it the place where you thought someone would be called and I was just looking into this study what differentiated Paul from all the other apostles these are some of the things that really stood out so what's interesting is that no matter where Paul was to live

Tarsus or Jerusalem all Paul had to do was walk into any synagogue and every rabbi would have given bowed down and let him come and do the teaching speaking he would have been that well taught by his own account in Philippians he said he was a zealous legalist a Hebrew of Hebrews totally 100% committed to the law in every detail so for the rest of this sermon I actually want to read you an introduction in one of the commentaries because it tells the awesome story of Paul so it was probably while Paul was in Tarsus that he began hearing about this new sect that was filling Jerusalem not only with its teaching but also with its converts like most of the Jewish leaders in Palestine Saul was deeply offended by

Jesus' claims to Messiahship and dedicated himself to stamping out the presumed heresy he was still a young man when he came back to Jerusalem but due to his zeal and natural ability he soon became a leader in persecuting the church instead of the gospel softening his heart the gospel hardened his heart if you remember the story in Acts 8 where Stephen was preaching to the leaders of the Jewish faith they stoned him to death Saul was there Saul witnessed this stoning this murder and it continued to harden his heart that he began ravaging the church entering house after house dragging off men and women and put them in prison

Luke reports that Saul was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord it's almost as if he became like a war horse with the smell of battle in his nostrils snorting out unrelenting fury against everyone and everything Christian not content with persecuting believers in Jerusalem and Judea Saul went to the high priest in Acts chapter 9 and asked for a letter from him so that he would go to the synagogues of Damascus so that if he found any belonging to the way the faith those who proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord both men and women he would bring them bound to Jerusalem Saul was consumed by a passion to imprison and execute Christians and before going to Damascus he had hounded Christians in many other foreign cities outside of

Israel we know history tells us that around that time Damascus had about 150,000 people including many thousands of Jews it is therefore possible that the synagogues of Damascus to which Saul referred could have numbered a dozen or more Damascus being the capital of Syria was about 160 miles north of Jerusalem require at least a six day travel but on his way there just as he was approaching Damascus suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him Saul Saul why are you persecuting me what's interesting in his defense before King Agrippa we learn many years later that

[29 : 49] Paul reported that Jesus then added it is hard for you to kick against the goads now if you're familiar with those euphemisms what it meant was sometimes when you'd have a spear and you were doing your you'd have your sheep and your goats and you're trying to get them to move you'd poke the sheep but sometimes the sheep and the goats would kick back at you and Paul and God was saying why are you kicking back against me in abject fear Saul replied to the heavenly voice who are you Lord and Jesus responded I am Jesus whom you are persecuting at that moment Paul must have both been terrified and shattered terrified that he was in the very presence of

God and shattered by the discovery that he had been assaulting God rather than serving him imagine at that moment Saul had given himself over to the study that the persecuting of the saints he believed was everything that God had called him to and in that moment like a lightning bolt would have descended upon him you're not serving me Paul you're persecuting me think about this for a moment have you guys ever been challenged with anything in your life that you believe you were doing because you were serving God and believing in your whole heart that what you were doing is good and righteous before God only to be confronted with God's word that what you were doing in fact is not serving me but assaulting me Paul was or

Saul was devastated to realize that the blood he had been shedding was the blood of God's people the Jesus whom fellow Israelites had ridiculed beaten and put to death the Jesus upon whom Stephen had called as Saul stood by consenting to his death the Jesus whose followers Saul himself had been imprisoning and executing that Jesus was indeed God just as he claimed now Paul stood exposed and helpless before him blinded by the dazzling brightness of God's revealed majesty and glory for several years Paul had been totally engrossed in the annihilation of the church and had he fulfilled his plan the church would have died in its infancy drowned in its own blood if the

Lord had immediately added but rise and enter the city and it shall be told you what you must do in Acts 9 6 Saul could very well have expired simply from fear over the enormity of his sin many years later Paul looked back on that experience and he writes for us in 1 Timothy 1 he says I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me because he considered me faithful putting me into service even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor and yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus tell me you don't understand

God's love more when you've been so far from God's love amen he says it is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners among whom I am the foremost of all on that road near Damascus Saul was marvelously and eternally transformed although temporarily blinded and all but speechless during that experience he submitted his life to Christ it is likely that Saul was so vehemently bent on destroying Jesus followers that no Christian would have been able to present the gospel to him successfully to come out and present the gospel would have been a death sentence to Paul so

[34 : 57] God in his goodness and kindness stepped in himself once again only God by miraculous intervention could get Paul's attention salvation Saul had to be utterly shattered before he could listen to God's truth he was so feared by the church that even the apostles would not talk to him when he first asked to visit them they found it impossible to believe that Saul of Tarsus could be a disciple of Christ consistent with Saul's natural zealousness as soon as he regained his sight he was baptized and had some nourishment after three days without food and drink he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus the very synagogues to which he had been given letters from the high priest permitting him to arrest any Christians he found among them it is hardly surprising that those hearing him continued to be amazed and were saying is this not he who in

Jerusalem destroyed those who he called on this name and who had come for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests Free by remarkable Yahweh and glad on Joel about discipling war and in Mary text on his name this Open carbine in Satan 3 God obeyed in name you don't need to go to seminary you don't need to be a Christian for decades upon decades to share the gospel Saul was so successful in proclaiming the gospel that soon his former accomplices along with other unbelieving Jews in Damascus planned to kill him in their determination to exterminate this this traitor to their cause they enlisted the political and military support of the ethnarch under Eretus the king according to second Corinthians but Acts 9 says but their plot became known to Saul and they were all also watching the gates day and night so they might put him to death but his followers took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall luring him in a large basket as Paul himself explains in his letter to the Galatians he was at this point that he went to Arabia spending three years there according to Galatians we believe that it was there that the apostle learned much and received direct revelation from the

Lord as he testified earlier in Galatians the gospel he preached was not according to man for I neither received it from man nor was I taught it but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ we actually believe some of the scholars which I would believe in that during that time Jesus Christ himself appeared to Paul and trained him for those same amount of three years that he trained all the other apostles after that divine seminary training in Arabia Paul went back to Damascus for a brief time there of course he had to escape again using a basket only after that three-year period did Saul go to Jerusalem and meet with the other apostles through the trusting and gracious intercession of Barnabas the apostles finally acknowledged Saul as a true believer and accepted him into fellowship the exact chronology of this time period is almost impossible to determine but we believe he spent 15 days into Jerusalem with with Peter at which time he may or may not have communicated with other apostles but he soon began teaching and preaching there and was so forceful in arguing with the Hellenistic Jews that they again were attempting to put him to death it says but when the brethren learned of it they brought him down to the city of Caesarea and sent him back home to Tarsus we believe there in Tarsus he founded several churches and he began to strengthen these churches after Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem church to organize the church of Antioch of Syria he ministered there for a period of time and then decided to to enlist the help of Saul after searching out Saul and Tarsus Paul Barnabas brought him to Antioch and it came about that the entire year they met with the church they taught considerable numbers of people and it was during this time in Antioch under the joint ministry of Saul and Barnabas that the disciples were first called Christians and this is where the story of Paul and this is where the story of Paul gets very amazing as he sets out on these missionary journeys worldwide famine happened and what Paul did is he actually went to the Gentile churches that he had ministered to and he took the gifts from these Gentile ministries and Jerusalem is starving starving the Jews who were pretty much unloving to the outsiders the Gentiles the barbarians the ones who did not believe that they could even enter into the kingdom but Acts 13 tells us that God set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them then when they had fasted prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away and this is when Paul began his unique ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles so now we find ourselves at this book of Romans it is written from the city of Corinth it is the spring of 58

Paul is now finishing up his third missionary journey he's walked and sailed throughout the biblical lands he's not simply at the middle point of his career but the whole while as we learn from the book of Romans he's always desired to go to Rome but Rome was just a touch point so he could go to Spain so driven by his desire to reach the Gentiles to all the ends of the earth but before he goes through to Romans and to Rome and Spain he's got this gift this collection from the Gentile churches to bring to Jerusalem what an amazing story of God's grace amen that God would use this man who was such an enemy of the church of Jerusalem that only a few decades later he would use him as the messenger not only to teach but the money to help them live to pay for food during this time

Paul in 2nd Corinthians at this point of his life that he's writing this book of Romans and I want you to understand this he says I am far more labors and far more imprisonments that I have been beaten without number I have been often in danger of death five times I received from the Jews 39 lashes three times I was beaten with rods once I was stoned three times I was shipwrecked a night and a day I have spent in the deep I have been in frequent journeys in dangers from rivers dangers from robbers dangers from my countrymen dangers from the Gentiles dangers in the city dangers in the wilderness dangers on the sea dangers among false brethren I have been in labor and hardship through many sleepless nights in hunger and thirst often without food in cold and exposure apart from such external things there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches and here he is with a concern for his brothers in Rome so when Paul writes this letter he is no lightweight he's not had the rosy life of a life's found in the loving embrace of mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters he's traveled the road so when he talks about suffering he has suffered when he talks about loss he knows loss but when he teaches us about trusting God trusting the gospel this is a man that we are compelled to listen to amen this is one who has been there so here he writes this letter to a group of Jewish and Gentile

[45 : 09] Christians what's interesting about the church of Rome is history doesn't tell us who founded it there's actually no record that any of the apostles went there they all seem to have gone east so what we believe that happened is during the day of Pentecost when Jesus Christ arose and went to heaven and people were speaking in tongue and saved some people returned to Rome and what did they do let me tell you about the person of Jesus and these people taught and the church grew but now they need some other teaching because they've got questions and Paul is addressing many of those questions that they have are the same questions that we have we know the end of the story we know that Paul eventually makes it to Rome courtesy of the emperor but instead in a luxury liner he does it in the in chains at the bottom of a ship but before he does he pens us this letter for this church a letter that has moved men from having hearts of stone to rocks of flesh hearts of flesh what I believe our time together in the book of Romans my prayer for this church and for my life as well as yours is that we will be able to rejoice with the those who rejoiced as Paul did when we read at the end of how much they rejoiced in the everlasting words of Paul written in verse 15 he simply says therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing in your name rejoice oh Gentiles with his people and again it says praise the Lord all you Gentiles and let all the peoples extol him and that is if again out of the words of Isaiah it says the root of Jesse will come even he who arises to rule the Gentiles in him will the

Gentiles hope my hope and prayer is that we would find that hope in a real everlasting way in this book let us pray dear Lord heavenly father I just give you thanks for those that you have lifted up that you have called father I know there's many testimonies here there's people from many lands that you have called to your truth there is no story that is the same and father I just think of all those incredible marvelous things that you do within our lives that there is no coincidences connections with people where we're able to share our heart story with them the opportunities we have to talk to someone about the love of Jesus where we're able to come wrap our arms around someone and say hope is not gone it is found in Jesus father some people find their hope in their identity or what they do or who they belong to or why they do the things they do some put their hope in knowledge some put their hope in works but any hope that is not found in

Christ Jesus is a lost hope and not only is it a hope that is found in you but it is a transformative hope it is a hope that makes a man like Saul go from a murderer to giving his life to the cause of Jesus Christ it is a man who is willing to put his life on the line and eventually die for the truth of the gospel father we understand that belief is a gift of God and I pray that as we come to learn and understand your words written in this book that our strength our faith our belief may be increased may our minds be settled with the understanding of your truth may your word confront us where we need to be confronted may your word strengthen where we need to be strengthened may your word complete us in those areas where we so much need work we thank you for never giving up on

Paul nor us may you give us an understanding may we devote this time maybe even 20 minutes a day to a reading of several chapters of Romans this these next several months in order to understand these incredible words not only for the nourishment to our own soul but to an understanding that we may proclaim your word more boldly with greater understanding we thank you for your son which is at the center of this book we thank you for your love oh lord and all of god's people said amen so this morning we are going to continue our worship in communion we understand that communion is a table is a place where we come to share a meal with one another who have given themselves over to the love of

Christ isn't that what Christianity is all about giving ourselves over to the love of Christ what he's done to renew us transform us change us but there is a future aspect of the table that we don't always talk about and I know Dave and I have been talking about it and some of these things are near and dear to his heart but just this idea of coming together is a picture of the future we are to have without sin in the presence of God amen to just sit around the table of our father the one who loved us and died for us to come together that we can just say thank you thank you for making us who we are for calling us to be children we understand from the book of Matthew it just simply reads now as they were eating on that night before Jesus was betrayed Jesus took bread and after blessing it broke it gave it to the disciples and said take eat this is my body and he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying drink of it all of you for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins

[53 : 02] I tell you I'll not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom that is a promise that he looks forward to so this morning as we come if you're new here we we ask that you would indeed be a believer of Jesus Christ you have given your life to him you are clearly able to say you believe that you have called on the name of Jesus what we do and how we practice this is you'll just come and take a biscuit and grape juice take it return to your seat we'll have a worship song we pray that you use this time as silent meditation we ask that you just kind of confess your sins and by that you don't need to go over everything if you've been a Christian you've already been redeemed of your sins but just to kind of come and clean your feet because there's those sins that dirty us during the week sometimes they're broken relationships sometimes they're just angry words with our spouse our children our friends but we need this time to explore and just to make sure that we are right before you so we ask that you'd come take it sit down enjoy this time where we can sit and pray and then after we're done

I'll give thanks and then we'll take it together as a family sometimes I feel like we're doing such an injustice to such an incredible meal what it's supposed to demonstrate to us right to come before a banquet table with our father and to have the choicest foods and the richest wines but one day we will be able to do that and we look forward to that and this represents us so we give joy and thanks for what we have and what we have before one another because there's some people in some places do not have the opportunity to take this with one another so let me just simply pray before we disperse of these elements dear God we thank you for your body that was broken for us and the blood that was shed for us that we can call each other brothers and sisters because we are children of the great king you came you redeemed us and father although this might not be the robust meal the meaning and significance is not anything other than robust it is deep and it is true and it is something to be pondered upon it is something that is meant to reflect a life's change a new disposition a heart that is given over entirely to you that we can clearly say we are of the king until that day comes when we can worship with you just as we read in revelation the angels singing holy holy holy holy lord lord god almighty may we do the same in our worship father as we come before you this morning god's people said amen amen one three