

Reading Schedule for October 9-15, 2017

Believe it or not, we are going to finish the Book of Romans this week. As I told you from the beginning, I wanted to have an overview of the book before we progressed through it section by section. This Sunday we will finish our fifth week in the Book of Romans as we are ready for the implications of the Gospel. These sermons will mean more to us as we have read through the whole book and contemplated how it might apply to our lives. The first reading is very practical, and we will progress through the unique aspects of the Book of Romans before we conclude on this coming Sunday. I know you won't be disappointed.

October 9 – Romans 12:9-21: “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” (v.16) Right in the middle of this practical message about love, relationship and leaving room for God's anger, we have this message that ties it all together with harmony. I could have picked any verse in this section because each of them is applicable to my life. At one point I memorized all of these verses because they were something I wanted to have in my mind and heart. Jesus is the Son of God, and he came down to be among us and relate to those of low position. These words apply the life of Jesus to how you might live. What stands out to you? What is especially challenging?

October 10 – Romans 13:1-7: “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” (v.1) There is no doubt that this command is very challenging. So often the direction of human government seems contrary to what God would want. Yet those in authority are to be respected. I am called to submit to their governance. Obviously there are times when we will oppose the government because it is dishonoring to God. For example, if I was a doctor, I would never perform an abortion, even though our country has laws that permit abortion. If the government ever asked me to deny my faith, I would have to say no and then accept the consequences. Does this make sense? How do you respond to this reading about submitting to the governing authorities?

October 11 – Romans 13:8-14: “And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” (v.11) It seems to me that at every point in history believers have anticipated the coming of Jesus Christ. Even when Paul was writing the Romans, he was telling them to anticipate the day of their salvation. “The night is nearly over,” and so the day refers to Christ's return. There is an important aspect of being eager for Christ's return, because it creates a sense of urgency in our ministry to others. Do you agree? How do you respond to this message from Paul about being ready for Christ's return?

October 12 – Romans 14:1-23: “You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.” (v.10) I have noticed a lot in Scripture about judging people. I have an understanding that it is important for us to help each other so

that if we see our brother/sister stumble we will help correct him/her. But judging the world for its sin is God's job. We are accountable to Christ, and so is the world. It will all be made perfectly clear in the end. Our role now is to help point them to Jesus. There is much in this chapter that is food for thought (no pun intended). I make a distinction between judging my brother and sister, who need my helpful input of Spirit-led guidance, versus judging the world. This also pertains to the weaker brother or sister, and not causing them to stumble. How do you respond to this chapter? What stands out to you?

October 13 – Romans 15:1-13: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (v.13) This is one of my favorite benedictions in the Bible. There are so many aspects of these words that are inspiring to me. “Hope” is something that will sustain you and me. “Overflowing with hope” because of the Holy Spirit is what gets my attention. The Holy Spirit is always “yes” and “amen” for God's children. I have prayed these words for my wife and those closest to me. I am praying these words for you as you read them. May you be filled up with God's Spirit so that you will have love, joy, peace, patience . . . How do these words inspire you?

October 14 – Romans 15:14-33: “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.” (v.20) I can relate to these words. I am blessed to preach the truth of the Gospel Sunday after Sunday, always hoping that someone will be there who needs to hear these life-giving words. One of the greatest pleasures of my life is preaching the message of God's timeless Word. I believe that Spirit-led teaching will nourish believers and convict those who need Christ. I would suggest that I have a holy ambition to do so. It is a strenuous effort that I accept with spiritual passion. May the Lord use me in proclaiming his Word to our church and all those who will listen. Please pray for me. What stands out to you in these verses that you might apply to your life?

October 15 – Romans 16:1-27: “Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.” (v. 25-27) I have included these with the idea of you reading this several times as a wrap-up to the Book of Romans. Paul has not even met the people he is writing, and yet this is his heartbeat for them. In some ways, this is the culmination of Paul's heartbeat in this comprehensive book about the Gospel. What have you learned from Romans? How has reading Romans for the last month helped you?

Prayers: Pray for the most exciting days of the year as we see our attendance increase, praying that people will come to faith in Jesus Christ.