

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul said of those who knowingly practiced unrighteousness, “Do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (Rom 2:4). I praise you today as the God of kindness, the God who is longsuffering and patient with me. Your grace is poured out in my life so that I can live in righteousness and holiness, and you look forward to the day when you will give me eternal life (Rom 2:7). Praise the Lord!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me how Paul went to Greece and visited the church at Corinth just as he promised (2 Cor 13:1). The church completed their collection for the Judean churches (Rom 15:26), and Paul stayed there three months (Acts 20:3). This suggests that the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians was restored, and it shows me that healing and renewal can come when I humble myself and submit to your Word. While he was in Corinth, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Rome. The letter expressed Paul’s desire to visit the church and share in their ministry, and it sought their support for his future missionary work in Spain. Paul also wanted the Romans to understand the gospel which he preached, and he carefully explained your plan to save both Jews and Gentiles alike through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16). He began by affirming that the Gentiles were justly condemned as sinners, for “although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him” (Rom 1:21). This teaches me that there are no “innocent” people in the world, for *everyone* becomes aware of your existence. Those who claim there is no God are actually suppressing the truth and clinging to their unrighteousness (Rom 1:18). This means that man-made religions (which are forms of idolatry) are not the result of man’s search for truth, but rather the result of man’s rejection of you! Paul continued by asserting that the Jews were also accountable for their sin, for there is no partiality with you. If the Jews thought they could hide behind their heritage and knowledge of the Law, while at the same time doing the very things the Law condemned, they were very much mistaken. They would come under your righteous judgment just like the law-breaking Gentiles (Rom 2:3). There were advantages and privileges to being a Jew, yes, but with those privileges came the responsibility to uphold and obey your commands. This teaches me that I cannot rely on my church attendance or religious upbringing to make me right with you. Paul concluded this section with the statement: “Both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one’” (Rom 3:9–10). If “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” how can I be justified and righteous before you? “Through faith in Jesus Christ...for...all...are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith” (Rom 3:22–25). Hallelujah! There is cleansing for sin in the precious blood of Jesus! My salvation is based, not on works, but on grace-enabled faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Paul supported his claim by appealing to Abraham, that timeless example of salvation by grace through faith. Abraham was justified by faith, not works; by grace, not Law; by divine power, not human effort. Just as righteousness was “counted” to him, “it will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord” (Rom 4:24). Glory to God!

Reflection

There is coming a day when you will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom 2:16). Is there any secret sin in my life? Am I clinging to some small indulgence of the flesh?

Request

Father, help me to imitate the example of Abraham. He believed what you said, he obeyed what you commanded, and he put his hope in what you promised. Oh, for such a heart of faith!

Thanksgiving

How grateful I am to know that “a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter” (Rom 2:29). I, too, can be a child of Abraham, just like Jesus!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “Living by Faith” – James Wells.

Meditation Verse: Romans 1:17.