
Our New Life in Christ

DARRELL DELANEY

Imagine if you had a \$1,000,000 debt that you had to pay off in a year or else you would have to spend the rest of your life in prison. For most people, that would be a seemingly impossible feat to pull off. Now imagine that someone you don't even know comes to pay the debt for you. How would you respond? In this episode of *Groundwork*, we will talk about the implications of the gospel that saves us from something far more important than financial debt. We will see just how much God loves us as we continue our study in the book of Romans next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in part two of our six-part series on the book of Romans, and we noticed that Paul is talking to an audience that he never actually met—that he never got a chance to go over and visit, even though his heart and his longing was to go over and see the church that God had built in that area. This is a letter he sent in advance, but he never made it there; and so, we saw in the last episode that we talked about the *bad* news of the gospel and we are turning the corner in this episode on the good news of the gospel.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Episode one and Romans 1, 2, 3 that we looked at in the first program left us desperate for a solution to a horrible problem with sin, and Paul is going to start getting to that. He gets to the full-blown explication of the good news in Romans 8. Today, we are going to look at 4 through 7; a major, major task to get all of these chapters into one *Groundwork* program here, but we are going to do our best to move it along. So, there is nobody righteous, Paul said in Romans 3...nobody; nobody at all. So now, in Chapter 4, Paul is going to write from the position that somehow or another, we have access to God the Father through Jesus Christ, and he is going to start laying out how that goes.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Paul has let us know that you cannot get righteousness from earning it by obeying the law; and there is a new righteousness that has been revealed by God, and that righteousness is called justification by faith alone; and faith is not in you, not in me, not in what we can do, but it is in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. That is the gift of eternal life that we have when we receive it. Then we have access to God; we have peace; we have forgiveness; and Paul uses Abraham as an argument in this example when he reads it in the chapter that we are talking about, Chapter 4.

SCOTT HOEZEE

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? ²If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Okay, so now we are back to something we also talked about in the first program, Darrell, and that was the confusion of what law and ritual did. What place does law and ritual offer? There was a confusion among some people, including some Jewish people like Paul that, well, what got you saved were the outward rituals.

So, after Abraham let himself and his kin get circumcised, then they became saved; and Paul is saying here: No; they got saved first by grace alone. They got saved first just by believing in God as God enabled them to do. In fact, he goes on here in Romans 4:9.

DARRELL DELANEY

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abrahams's faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! ¹¹And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. So, this verse is saying that not only is he a father of the ones who were circumcised, but a father of the ones who were uncircumcised because he believed before that circumcision happened. So, for those Jews who believed we are going to follow the law that says to be circumcised, that is our righteousness, they have to be corrected to understand it was because Abraham believed in God's Word that he was saved, and then circumcision came as the demonstration of that faith in an act of obedience.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; when you go to seminary you may get introduced to a little Latin phrase called the *ordo salutis*, which means literally the *order of salvation*; what are the order of events here? And so, the Jews, Paul is saying, and this will include himself before he met Jesus on the Damascus Road. Paul will talk about that. I used to think this way, too, Paul will eventually say, particularly to the Philippians. The Jews had gotten the order wrong. They thought that keeping the law, outward rituals, keeping kosher, following the food laws, doing that is what opened the gates of salvation to you, and Paul is saying: No; wrong order. Those things come after. God did not give the law to the Israelites in Egypt while they were still slaves, and then said to them: Keep the law and I will lead you out of this place. No; *first* God led them out by grace alone, then at Mount Sinai he gave them the law. There too, you have to get the order of things right. It is not what you do that gets the salvation ball rolling, it is not what you do or what you observe or what law you follow or what practice you do, it is God; and in the case of circumcision, Paul is saying: Look, that is just a sign of what God had already done...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is just a reminder of what God had already done for you by grace.

DARRELL DELANEY

And just imagine how that sounds to a person who is not Jewish, and that circumcision is not even a part of their whole lifestyle. This sounds impossible if they have to be circumcised, and they have to follow the laws of Moses. Basically, you are saying to a Gentile: You gotta be a Jew first, and then you can be saved. And we found out in the book of Acts when Paul was doing his missionary journeys that the Holy Spirit fell on both Jews and Gentiles alike when they heard the gospel message and responded by faith. So, this is actually better news for people who aren't following the law, because they don't need that requirement in order to be credited with righteousness.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And nobody in the book of Acts was more shocked about this than the Apostle Peter. Remember in Acts 10, he had that vision of all this non-kosher food...all the food Israelites were not supposed to eat, and God says: Go ahead, Peter; eat it. Eat a lobster. Go ahead; have some ham...you know, go ahead; have some... No, no, no, no... And then, no sooner is he trying to figure out why God showed him that vision and these non-Jews from a man named Cornelius, a Roman soldier no less, come and say Peter has to come to Cornelius's house. Peter goes there. The Holy Spirit falls on them. There is a mini-Pentecost; and he says: This doesn't make any sense. They aren't Jews. They haven't been circumcised. They haven't even tried to follow the law, and

yet, the Holy Spirit comes on them. Could somebody get me a basin of water so I can baptize them immediately? So, Peter was shocked that he had gotten the order of salvation wrong all along, but that is the good news and the message of the gospel.

DARRELL DELANEY

And they had actually a council about that in Jerusalem in Acts, and Paul was feeling like he was called to bring the Gentiles that very message, which is why we have this letter in the book of Romans in the first place...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly.

DARRELL DELANEY

Because that place had a majority of non-Jewish people in it. There were a few Jews sprinkled around. You mentioned that in the other episode...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, right.

DARRELL DELANEY

But this is actually to people who were Gentiles, who were not Jews; and this is utter good news for them to know that they don't have to become a Jew; they don't have to follow the letter of the law to be saved, but they can actually pick up and believe and have faith and be credited righteousness as a grace gift.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That was such a hard lesson for Peter to learn, that even after that story that I just mentioned from Acts Chapter 10, Peter still lived a little fear of the Jews who still believed that that was the way to salvation; and so, when he was with some Jews one time, he fell back and made Gentiles feel second class. Paul got wind of that and he was mad; and so, when they had that conference in Acts 15, the Jerusalem...kind of the first meeting of Synod, or the first general assembly of the Church...they had to hash this out, and Paul won the day. People do not have to become Jews before they become Christians. They just become Christians by grace right away; as soon as the Holy Spirit comes to them. You believe God, and that is itself a gift of God; you get credited with righteousness.

So, in just a minute we are going to move on, because we've got to keep moving. Chapters 5 and 6 of Romans, that is coming up next, so stay tuned.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and we are continuing our study of the book of Romans, and we have to kind of take a bird's-eye view on some of this stuff, Darrell. We cannot possibly drill down into everything. We are trying to cover four chapters in this episode alone; but you should read the book in its entirety. You should read it verse by verse the way it is meant to be read.

Now, we jump back into Romans Chapter 5. Paul goes deep into the heart that God has for sinners.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we see in this book where God is being displayed as the one who loves people so deeply; and I love the fact that God initiates that love. If you pick up in verse 6, it says: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It is so moving to me, Scott, because when I was going the opposite direction; when I didn't want to hear anything about God; when I didn't want to go to church; when I didn't want to read my Bible; when I just thought this is what I want to do with my life, God decided: I am not going to wait for Darrell to come to his senses, I am going to show my love for him first, and he will get it on the back end when they show the gospel message to him, and when he understands his testimony. God does this first; he initiates that love, and he shows it without regard.

SCOTT HOEZEE

While *we* were still sinners, Christ died for us; and Paul is saying that love is not contingent upon anything you do; it is what God does in Jesus, and God does it first. God laid on him the iniquity of us all. The chastisement of him was our peace. That is Isaiah Chapter 53. So, we deserve punishment, right? Romans Chapter 1:18; we saw it in the first program: The wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. Yep, that is what we deserve, but what we get instead is love.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am so grateful for that. I know that many of us can think back through our lives and be grateful for that. Because Paul is explaining the benefit of what happens when you trust in God and believe him, and he credits you with his righteousness; and in addition to be saved from that wrath you just mentioned, he actually shows that we have been reconciled back to God.

In verse 18 it says:

Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. ¹⁹For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

So, just to back up here: Paul is alluding to the comparison between Adam in Genesis and Jesus, who is also called the Second Adam. So, we see that, of course, Adam is the spokesperson of all humanity when he sins and disobeys, sin enters into the world. You said total depravity...that is what Calvin taught us...that is how it entered into the world when he disobeyed. So, all of us are born in sin; but because Jesus came, and he was not the seed of Adam, he was conceived of the Holy Spirit, he does not have sin in him; he lives the perfect life, and he reverses the curse, if you will—pays the price for our sins—and then gives us the benefit of having eternal life. So, that is why the turn of phrase on the Adam and Second Adam and first Adam, because Jesus is reversing the pain and effects of sin and brokenness, and now we get that gift by faith.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And all through history, people have sometimes objected that it doesn't seem fair that I get blamed for what Adam and Eve did. I mean, Adam sinned and *I* get the blame?! Yep, that is just the way it goes, the Bible says; sorry, you know; that one man, he kind of poisoned the whole DNA...the spiritual DNA of humanity; but Paul says: Good news; it goes the other way. Now, through a perfect Adam...Christ...you get his righteousness. It wasn't your righteousness; it is his. It wasn't your sin, it was Adam's. Fine; now it is my sin. It is not my righteousness, it is Jesus'; but now it is my righteousness. So, the door swings both ways. Good news, Paul says. The door swings both ways.

DARRELL DELANEY

I often think about that when people say that. It is like, well, Adam did this stuff and now... It is kind of like the argument they had in Ezekiel where our forefathers ate this fruit...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

And now our teeth are set on edge. That whole phrase meaning that: Oh, we are kind of stuck because they sinned; but then, in that verse in Ezekiel, God says: No; the soul who sins will die. So now, people are not being deceived anymore. We are actually choosing unrighteousness now. We are not being bribed to do it;

we are not being tricked by the serpent; we are actually choosing the wrong things; which is why we need this salvation gift and why it is such good news.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But there is a problem, because Paul realized early on that once he told people that...once Paul said: You know what? What you do doesn't matter. It is what God does. And there are a few people who said: Oh, really. So then, I am just going to live however I want: Eat, drink and be merry. Paul takes this up now in Romans 6: ¹What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

So, here Paul is saying: It's true; what you do doesn't get you saved, but once you are saved, you are also changed. You died with Jesus, right? I mean, we often see baptism as kind of just only think about water washing away dirt, like water on our hands. Now you drown, Paul says. You drown in the waters of baptism. The good news is, if you drown with Jesus, you get raised with Jesus. So, you cannot then say: Oh, so I am just going to keep on sinning. I mean, God likes to forgive, so I am going to give him lots to forgive. No! You cannot want to live that way, Paul says; you are new!

DARRELL DELANEY

Man, this... I'm telling you that Romans 6 is one of my favorite places in all of scripture, because it shows that we identify with Christ. He has also buried it. Our Baptist friends, they are the ones who immerse. They see there is a symbol there: Buried in the likeness of his death; go down; go up; raised in the likeness of his resurrection; and it shows that we have a new life and a new way of living, and because it is in Christ now. So now, we don't need to offer our bodies to these old things that we used to do.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; I actually saw a video recently about an Orthodox infant baptism, where they actually do dunk the kid under the water, and the kid comes up sputtering, but it gets the idea. It is not just a little sprinkling like we sometimes do in some of our churches. No; you go down into the waters and waters are deadly. So, there is much more to say here; and there is more to see in Romans Chapter 7. We are going to get to that in just a moment, so do stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Scott, we have covered Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in this second episode of our six-part series on Romans; and as we wrap up, we are going to go into Chapter 7, and we are looking very carefully about how we live now because we have been saved and identify with Jesus Christ; and so, we found out in Chapter 6 that we now identify with his death, burial and resurrection; and because of that, we can live a new life.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Romans 7:4: So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

In other words, yeah, we still follow the law as a way to say thank you to God, and as a sign that we have been made new people—a new creation, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians. We are a new creation now, so we are still bearing fruit, but good fruit, in the way it is supposed to be grown, which is as fruit of thankfulness and gratitude.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Paul picks up here in an argument that he is making. He starts talking legally, where he says: If you are bound to a law, you are bound for your entire life, and then when your life is over, you are released from that law; and he uses marriage as an example. So, okay; I made a covenant with my spouse for the rest of our days. We stood in front of everyone; we stood before God; we stood before the witnesses and the minister and made these vows for the rest of our lives, as long as we both shall live...

Scott Hoezee/

DARRELL DELANEY

Till death do us part.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right? So then, at that point, if a spouse passes away, then it is not adultery if you want to marry someone else or whatnot; and he uses that same thing spiritually. So, when we were old...part of the law in our old life...we died to that life; and now we have a new law that we are living under grace and favor with God, and that is for our eternal life. So, Paul is making that example very clear for us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Before we finish this program, we want to get to a part of Romans 7, which is a little...controversial...I don't know; scholars debate what it means, but let's just listen to it here, beginning at verse 14: We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no long I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

DARRELL DELANEY

²¹So, I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²²For in my inner being I delight in God's law, ²³but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So, we see Paul is actually showing here that there is a struggle between the old nature and the new nature. He makes this clearer in Galatians, and even in Ephesians he talks about this, where he is struggling with his old self. He wants to do right, and the hard part is that it is hard to carry out. Now, you mentioned that there are different views on this. One view is that this is [Paul's] after-believing-in-Christ struggle...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And others say that it is [Paul's] before-believing struggle.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; so, Paul here is clearly ramping up to Romans Chapter 8. He ends here: What a wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body subject to death? Well, the answer is going to come in Chapter 8:1: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So, some scholars think that what we just saw in these verses: The good that I would do, I do not do; the evil that I don't... This is his pre-conversion self. This is the struggle when you think you have to save yourself. However, it can serve double

duty, because we also know from other parts of Paul's writing that as long as we are not fully brought into the kingdom—until the kingdom fully comes—we are going to keep struggling. So, it is a little of both. There is a sense in which this applies to all of us who already are baptized Christians, but it also may be that in the structure of Romans, this is Paul's pre-baptism self, and he is bringing us up to baptism in Chapter 8. Either way, the point once again is: If it is up to us, we are sunk. If it is up to us, we are done. Even when I want to do good, I do the opposite; and Darrell, unfortunately, we all can see ourselves in that picture. I am never going to do that again. I am never going to touch that... I am never going to look at that... And then, you do! It is like, what is wrong with me?! You know, I keep making the same mistakes! Yes, that is how it goes.

DARRELL DELANEY

But that is the process of progressive sanctification that we are called to, and the Spirit is the one who changes us. So, what I am trying to learn to do in my own life, Scott, is to praise God for progress and not perfection, because I used to not care, and go off the deep end in some things that were not right for me to do or think or feel or respond to; but because God has been working in my life, I now struggle. That is a good thing, because it is not easy to return back to the things that we are not supposed to be a part of; and if people out there are struggling, start thanking God for that struggle, because it means you are moving in the right direction, until one day it won't be a thing. You will say no to it and then you will have strength behind it, but that takes progress because it doesn't happen overnight that you get into those things...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly.

DARRELL DELANEY

And it sometimes doesn't happen overnight to get out of them.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; so, as we rapidly come to the end of this episode, where we have covered four sprawling chapters in Paul's letter to the Romans, just a couple points: Again, just to reiterate, Darrell, what we already said: What good news! While we were still sinners, while we deserved nothing but condemnation from God, at that very time, God sent Jesus, and Jesus died for us. He didn't wait of us to get our act together. Jesus had his act together, and then transferred it to our credit by grace alone. So, that is one great thing. The other thing we saw is that the law doesn't save us, but it is important. Now it is our blueprint to lead the lives that glorify God.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think it is really important for us to know, too, that we become part of the family of God and get all the support that we need, through pastors, through peers, through family members. When we ask God to forgive us of our sins, we become part of that family of God, and to know that that sinful nature won't quit just because we believe is very important, too.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and even there, if we have been raised with Christ, then our subsequent sins will continue to be forgiven. We are going to see that in Romans 8, which will be the next program. We have great hope and peace and love in the forgiveness of a God who as credited us with righteousness by faith alone; thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we continue our study in Romans Chapter 8. Connect with us now at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or to tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Groundwork is a listener supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit the website, reframeministries.org, for more information and to find out about resources that can encourage your faith. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/our-new-life-in-christ>

Printed on March 11, 2025

©  ReFrame Ministries