

## Kingdom Transactions: *Passports to Freedom*

The last time I purchased a new car. I had to sign a bunch of papers and loan documents before I could actually say it was mine and drive it off the lot. The same was true when we signed papers for our first home. In fact, when you buy a house you have to go to a completely different organization called the “title” company, where all the important papers are signed. The title company reviews all documents and guarantees that everything is in order to protect the buyer, the seller, and the loan company in a legal binding agreement.

Our goal in *Journey* has been to walk with Jesus and learn first-hand about him and his mission. One thing we’ve learned is how much Jesus emphasized his Kingdom and how His kingdom is something we are to enter now. “The Kingdom of God has come,” was his continuing theme.

If God’s Kingdom has already begun, then the most important issue is signing up and getting involved. The Apostle Paul actually goes through, step by step, some very important transactions God has designed to take place in our lives as we take up residence in his Kingdom both now and on into the future.

### Journeying Together:

- 1). What is the most recent documents or important papers you have had to sign?
- 2). How often do you read the fine print of contracts? Why or why not?

### Road Map:

Romans 5 – 8: moves us through these Kingdom transactions and reveals how the life of God becomes our own. For a brief overview:

Romans 5 – *Free from wrath* – The transition from condemnation (Adam) to justification (Christ).

Romans 6 – *Free from sin* – The transition from sin to righteousness.

Romans 7 – *Free from Law* – The transition from being married to the Law to being married to Christ.

Romans 8 – *Free from death* – The transition from death (flesh) to life (Spirit).

1. In our flesh or in Adam we live under the tyranny of sin, condemnation, and death (Wrath of God). But through our new life in Christ Jesus we live in righteousness, justification, and life (Grace of God). We have a *super abounding* life in Christ that overcomes the curse from the Fall in Adam. In Christ, we are living in the “jet stream” of God’s Kingdom life. In Romans 5, Paul describes this new life as “standing in grace.” How would you describe your experience of being at peace with God and standing in abundant grace and life through Jesus Christ?
2. If our old life in Adam was already buried in Jesus' death on the Cross why is it necessary that we consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God? Why is it so important that we understand our solidarity with Christ and his Cross and move from death to life?
3. How does the Law figure in to our new life? What relationship does the Law have with sin and disobedience to God? Why is the Law no help in living this new life of victory? How does the burial of our old life in Adam or the flesh free us from the endless cycle of sin, condemnation, and death in our dysfunctional relationship in the Law and allow for a new rhythm of righteousness, justification, and life in marriage to Christ?
4. Jesus came that we might have life in him. This life is new in that it is through him and it is a life through the Holy Spirit’s indwelling. The fruit of the Spirit is listed in Galatians 5:22, 23. These are some of the best tangible evidences of Christ’s life taking shape in us.

Characteristics of the new life in Christ through the Spirit:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

**Note:** Signing legal documents in owning a car or a house can be complicated and difficult to understand.

5. How do these 4 chapters in Romans help explain the intricate transactions from our life in the old age to living the new life of the Spirit in the Kingdom of God?

6. What transactions still need to take place in your life for the Kingdom to be real for you? How can this group pray for you?

## My Journey:

1. How is God using *Journey* in your life and witness to others this week?

2. The gospel of Jesus is about freedom. We have been freed of God's wrath, sin, law, and death. Which of these freedoms is most meaningful to you right now and why?

3. Which fruit of the Spirit are you most grateful for right now, and which one would you most like to see developed?

4. How can this group pray for you right now?

**Backstory:** In this week's Journey we begin to understand some important steps in trading in the old life we inherited in the Fall of Adam and Eve for a new life in Christ. Our study this week is both complex and simple, depending on how deeply people choose to go in Romans 5-8. Lesson 10 is not meant to be any kind of exhaustive study on what many have declared as the foundational core of Paul's gospel. Steering people back to the broader reading of chapters 5-8 and staying close to the questions in our lesson will help participants get more of a birds-eye view of these chapters and hopefully see the bigger overarching issues that Paul is dealing with.

For starters, it is helpful to realize Paul's beginning argument in the letter to the Romans. By his own admission, he has never been to Rome. In addition, he is anxious to learn how the gospel is advancing in the capital of the Empire. He is also eager to share his understanding of the gospel as God has revealed it to him.

Many commentators hold that Paul's entire premise is summed up in chapter 1, verses 16 and 17, where we read:

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the*

*Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

Paul understands the gospel to be the power of God unleashed for our salvation – for Jew and Gentile alike. He says that in the gospel a righteousness from God has been revealed by faith and for faith and then quotes an Old Testament verse from Habakkuk 2:4.

Unfortunately, Habakkuk 2:4 is not such a simple correlation with Paul's reference in Romans 1:17. The issue in Habakkuk is that the wicked go unpunished while God appears to stand idly by. The prophet registers a complaint against God for allowing evil to go on unchecked. But God informs Habakkuk that the slide of evil will not continue forever. The kingdom of Babylon will be the hand of God's judgment for rebellious Judah. But even in the midst of this punishment, the righteous person will live by his faith in God. This is a word of promise and hope for Habakkuk and all those who are being overcome by evil.

Paul picks this verse up both to show how God has again stepped in to interrupt evil through the good news of Christ. But – and this is very important-- Paul very skillfully twists the verse in Habakkuk to reinforce what he is going to share about the gospel here in the letter to the Romans.

In Habakkuk, the verse reads: "The righteous will live by his faith," but in the original Greek of the verse in Romans, Paul intentionally turns the Habakkuk quote around to read: "By Faith the righteous will live." Modern translations miss the nuance in their attempt to render the verse less cumbersome, but the switch in the original is for affect. Romans 1:18 – 4:25, will deal with the first part of the verse by demonstrating that it is only *by faith* that anyone can become righteous. He will end this half of the argument by referencing it with two important Old Testament characters as examples. Abraham is introduced as the father of faith and King David is forgiven and justified by faith. In both cases, being declared righteous before God came in the form of something God did instead of any effort on the part of Abraham or David.

Chapters 5-8 of Romans continues the argument of Romans 1:17. If it is by faith that people are declared righteous, and not by their own

efforts to keep and observe the law, then how will they go on to live their lives in faith? Chapters 5-8 show how “the righteous by faith *will live*.” And how will they live? **In freedom!**

The righteous by faith will live *free from the wrath of God, free from the power of sin, free from the dysfunction of trying to live according to a spiritual reality like the law when the fall and sin have rendered us unspiritual. Finally, we are free from the flesh or death since we have died to the flesh (Adam) and moved on to a new life in the Spirit (Christ).*

Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it the power of God to bring us from death to life. Colossians 1:11-14 sums it up well:

*Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Col. 1:11-14