

96-06-07b

Okay, we're ready now to resume, and as promised, what we want to do is quickly look at these phrases where Paul talks about knowledge and talks about what God has revealed. And we begin in chapter 2, verse 2 of Romans. Paul says here, we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things, that God is righteous to judge people who practice these things that were talked about in Romans chapter 1. Now one of the things we want to watch for is not just to review these passages and we're going to go on forward in Romans, but to see what Paul does when he says this.

He communicates a lot of truth in this letter, doesn't he? He states dozens and probably hundreds of principles in Romans, but certain ones he reminds the people that he's talking to, he says, look, we know this. Or he asks them, don't you know this? Why does he do that? Why does he bother to say that? He's making a point that this knowledge ought to make a difference. Here is the way that this, for example, if I just gave you these principles and I didn't give you the application of them, you might think, well, that's a good piece of information, but it doesn't necessarily change the way I live.

These principles are things like God judges those who suppress the truth. Well, we say that's probably true. If it's God's truth and people push it away, he probably will judge them.

That's knowledge. Where we make the second step, we know that, we learn it from the Bible, we saw it in Romans 1. Now we are faced with an opportunity to apply that to ourselves. Okay, if God judges those who suppress the truth, so what? And this is a good exercise.

The Bible talks a lot about meditating on God's word and we think of that and we think, well, I ought to sit down and read a verse and then look skyward and, you know, let it fill me and inspire me and walk me away on a cloud of ease or something. What does it mean to meditate on God's word? I will offer you this thought. This is what it means.

When you see a truth in the word of God or you hear somebody, anybody express a truth that's valid from the word of God, to meditate on it and to have it make a difference in your life, we have to ask ourselves this question. If this is true, so what? Why has God bothered to preserve this particular truth down through the ages, two, three, four thousand years he's preserved this and delivered it to me today, why? Is it just a piece of academic information or does it make a difference in my life? So as we look at each of these things where Paul says, we know or do you know, we're going to pull out what Paul says we ought to be doing with this piece of information. So look at two, two.

Paul says, we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice these things. So what? What does that mean? Well, he answers that question right here in verse three. If the judgment of God rightly falls on people who suppress the truth, do you think this old man, that

you who are busy judging those who practice these things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? If the judgment of God falls on people who know the truth and don't respond to it, it will happen to us also.

That's the application. So it does make a difference. We have truth, don't we? We know that Christ died and bought us and that we are not our own.

We died with Christ when he died and the life that we now live, we should be living the way he lived. And that's a life that's lived to God, oriented toward God's purposes and God's objectives. A selfless devotion to duty is one of the things that the military, it's one of those stock phrases when you get an award, you know, Lieutenant so-and-so jumped on the grenade or Lieutenant so-and-so spent these last two years laboring away in the finance department or whatever and his courage and selfless devotion to duty reflect the highest traditions of the Marine Corps or whatever.

Selfless devotion to the mission, selfless devotion to duty, that's something admirable, that's something worthy. What does it mean, selfless devotion? It means that you recognize that this is a worthy thing and you lay aside your time, your goals, your preferences, I'd rather not be in these miserable circumstances, but this is achieving a purpose in God's plan, so great, let's go for it, let's go for the gusto. If you push away the truth, the judgment of God is coming.

So that's the truth and that's the application. We have the truth. We know where we stand in God's plan and we're responsible for that information.

Now, there has been a funny sort of, you know how in this letter as we've gone through, Paul says, what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? And he brings up these arguments that someone might raise. Well, I have heard a ridiculous argument that when people find out that if you learn something, God's going to hold you accountable for it. And usually, when we learn something, God will test us over that.

This is something that a lot of us have experienced. You can think back in some of the studies we've done in the past and we would see Jesus act a certain way or the disciples learn a certain lesson there in Mark. And then within a week or two of that, or sometimes a day or two, you would see that in your own life and you'd say, oh boy, you know, here's that very thing.

I'm on the hot seat here to put this, and it seems like God holds us accountable. He says, well, now you've got it, here's your pop quiz. And so people say, well, then let's not learn.

If I don't learn, I won't be tested. And if I don't learn, I won't be held accountable. Well, sorry, that's not a viable option either, because we have God the Holy Spirit who is inside us, leading us into all truth.

And if you push away from the truth and you say, well, maybe I'll just skip Bible class. I won't

learn anything, and then I won't be responsible for anything, and so forth. This is sort of like playing hooky from school.

There's a whole separate set of responsibility for that. So it's not like, it would be the equivalent of saying, well, I'm in the 11th grade here and I've got a big Algebra II test coming up, I just won't go to school. I won't go to Algebra class, I won't have to take the test.

There's a whole separate set of problems associated with that. That's a ridiculous thing. We have a great opportunity, and this is the way to be delivered out of this present evil age.

This is a way to not be in futility, to not be in darkness, and to experience a kind of happiness and a kind of peace and a kind of fulfillment that is indescribable. The world knows nothing about it. It is the heritage and the possession of believers in Jesus Christ.

But the only way we get it is by abandoning ourselves to the plan of God, and it takes faith. So that's our first observation here in Romans 2.2. God judges those who suppress the truth. So what? What's the application? I had better not neglect the truth.

I had better not push it away from me. I had better embrace it and pursue it because that is the way to life. Remember in Proverbs chapter 2 and following where wisdom is speaking, the Lord gives wisdom.

Out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity in every good path. And then he says, Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

That's a promise from God, and if we make this a goal, the peace of God, which transcends anything that this earth can offer, will be ours. It's a promise. So our second observation is in chapter 2, verse 4. He uses the same thing.

He says, Do you despise the riches of God's goodness, his forbearance, and his longsuffering, not knowing something? Paul is essentially saying, Do you not know that the goodness of God is leading you to repentance? God's patience, God's kindness, the grace, the lack of discipline, the tolerance that he has when we are wayward, when we're disobedient, the fact that he doesn't just blast us out of existence. Why is he so good? Why does he bear with us and suffer with us so long? He's trying to lead us to repentance. We are really going to see this come out when we get to Romans chapter 9, and he talks about the God with great patience putting up with the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction and so forth.

But he introduces that concept way back here. He says, You believer, are you despising the riches of his goodness and his kindness and his patience because you don't know that the reason he's being good and kind and patient is to get you to change your mind? Okay, that's a principle. God is being patient with us, and we may think, Well, nothing bad is happening to me.

I'm pursuing this and pursuing that. I'm living my life a certain way. Nothing particularly bad has happened.

And so we tend to say, Well, what's the big deal? I'm reasonably happy. I'm not suffering too much. And Paul says, Look, don't you know that the reason you're not suffering and the reason you're not abject misery is because you're a child of God and God is being kind and patient and giving you the opportunity to respond to the communication of the truth before he has to spank you to get you to pay attention? The goodness of God is leading you to a change of mind.

So don't think that because you're not suffering and because you're kind of putting God on the shelf and his plan on the shelf and you're reasonably happy that everything's fine. That's the application. The goodness of God leads us to a change of mind.

That's in chapter two, verse four. The third place where Paul uses this phraseology is in the same chapter in chapter two, verse 20. Now, this is one place where it is a little bit more implied than stated.

He says, You who think that you're all familiar with the law and you know the law of Moses inside out, you're an instructor of babes, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, you have a form of knowledge and truth in the law and you're so knowledgeable that you can teach others, you can hold Bible class, you can tell people how to live the Christian life and so forth. He says, If you're so smart that you can teach others, in verse 21, do you not teach yourself? You preach that a man should not steal. You have a piece of knowledge there.

The Bible, God says, don't steal. Don't take things that don't belong to you, whether it's time, money, possessions, attention. Don't take the attention of somebody that doesn't belong to you.

This is one of the reasons marriages get in trouble is that people start flirtations on the side at work or in some other social context and that's theft. You are taking the attention of someone and it doesn't belong to you. You're giving attention to someone that belongs to your spouse and you're stealing from that person.

It's theft. And so you can preach against stealing, thou shalt not steal, let him that stole steal no more and so forth, and yet if you think about the Word of God, you can be stealing. You can be depriving somebody of something that's rightfully theirs.

You can be taking something that really belongs to someone else. And we can't just think, well, it's shoplifting or it's juggling the books and getting money that doesn't belong to you. Stealing is appropriating anything that doesn't rightfully belong to us.

Believers do this all the time when we appropriate glory to ourselves by saying, well, I was down in the urban neighborhood helping the little afflicted children the other day. The good that is done for urban afflicted children, that glory belongs to God. We don't say, well, I was down there saving

souls and, well, as I was sharing the gospel the other day.

We're appropriating glory to ourselves that belongs to God and that's stealing. So Paul says, look, if you know the law and you know this principle, are you applying it? If you know that you're not supposed to steal, are you stealing? Attention and time that belongs to God and to his plan, are you taking it and investing it somewhere else? You who say do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? And you say, well, we know adultery is wrong and so forth, but Jesus said it happens in the mind. Are you fantasizing? Are you living a fantasy life with some imaginary woman? Are you looking at women in your periphery and having some sort of fantasy relationship? It's adultery and it's the very same thing.

He says, you who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? And his whole point is he's indicting the religious crowd because they claim knowledge of God and his word and his will and yet they're not applying it. They're not meditating on it and saying, so what? If this is true, how does it affect me? And any of the principles of the word of God, if you sit and think about it very long, you will find a place where it applies. And if we push it away and say, oh, well, adultery, I don't have a problem, I'm happily married and so forth, adultery is in the soul.

Stealing is in the soul. Coveting is in the soul. And we have to watch ourselves because we can do this every day.

Legalism, the problem that the Pharisees had of trying to establish righteousness and trying to impress people with what they were doing, it's a big problem and we can fall into it even unconsciously and we have to stop and evaluate ourselves. Am I seeking righteousness? Am I seeking vindication and justification in the eyes of people? We've got to stop and think. We've got to wake up and remember that this reality that God presents and that God reveals is more real than what we see and what people think and everything else.

Same thing in verse 29. The application of this is what he communicates in chapter 2, verse 29. He says, look, real obedience is not circumcision or uncircumcision.

It is that of the heart in the spirit, not the letter. It's not whether or not you have gone out and had some illicit relationship. What's going on in your mind? Are you looking at images in a magazine or images on TV? Are you looking at someone else and saying they've got something and I really wish I had that? What's going on in our soul? Real obedience, real religion, real spirituality goes on in the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.

Paul, the apostle, didn't get much praise from men in this life. John the Baptist didn't get much praise. Jesus Christ didn't get much praise from men.

And if we're seeking that, if we're seeking the approval of family or friends or neighbors or whatever, we're on the wrong track. So that's the application. And it seems like an abstract

principle here that, well, he is a Jew who is one inwardly, that it's the spirit and not the letter.

We have to ask ourselves that next question. So what? That ought to make a difference to me. How can that make a difference in my life? Am I failing in this area? I need to look at myself with the same critical eye that I tend to turn on other people.

It's easy to look at someone else and say, well, you know, look at their priorities are all messed up or they're doing this or doing that. We need to turn that laser beam judgment on ourselves and say, am I where I need to be? Because each of us should be living our life before the Lord and we should not be judging. Look at chapter two.

You who judge another ought to be busy judging yourself. That's what we're called to do. That's what that knowledge ought to do.

We don't get this knowledge so that we can look and judge others and say, well, I'm up on this lofty plateau and look at all these heathens down here. God gives us this knowledge so that we can evaluate ourselves. The next explicit mention is in chapter three, verse 19.

And the principle that's expressed there is whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law. Now there's a deep, profound spiritual truth. The regulations of the Mosaic law are for the people that were under the Mosaic law.

Who were those people? It's Old Testament Israelites. What the law says, it says to those who are under the law. So what? Notice Paul says, we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law.

So he's making a point out of the fact that we know this and it ought to make a difference. Well, now here's an abstract thing. This is going to dispensations and I'm not under the law and so forth.

What difference does that make? Well, he makes the application right here. The reason for that is so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God. When the law spoke to the Israelites, what did it tell them? You're righteous, you're holy, you're good.

No. The law said, you're unrighteous, you're sinful, you're condemned. That's what the law said.

And who did it say it to? It said it to God's people. It said it to the Israelites that came out of Egypt under the blood of the Passover lamb, believers. The law spoke to believers and said, you are sinful, you are condemned.

And so if the people of God who are believers and came out under the blood, God's law says you're condemned and guilty. What does that say about the rest of the world? It doesn't have a prayer. It doesn't have a ghost of a chance.

God's people are condemned by God's own law. So the rest of the world is doubly guilty. The whole world is guilty before God.

And what's the point of that? Doing righteous deeds is not going to establish righteousness in your own mind or in anybody else's mind. And that's what he says in verse 20. By the deeds of the law.

And what was the law? It said, this is a good thing to do, this is a bad thing to do. Following that code doesn't make you righteous. By that law comes the knowledge of sin.

And that's an important point. Don't let anyone drag you into a kind of Christianity that says you're a good Christian if you're in ministry. You're a good Christian if you show up every time the doors are open.

You're a good Christian if you put a certain amount in the offering. If you tithe. Or if you come down for the prayer meeting and pray all night long on New Year's Eve.

Or if you do this or do that or do the other. You ought to have devotions. You ought to get in a small group.

You ought to be disciplined. You ought to be learning memory verses and come down and quote them to us and so forth. Those are works.

And by those works nobody becomes righteous. The whole point of Paul's letter here is forget about trying to impress people with what you're doing. Concentrate on letting God impress you with what He's doing.

That's the way of righteousness. That's the way of faith. And we think, but that's a do-nothing Christianity.

The lost will be lost and the hungry will be hungry and so forth. Not at all. When God transforms us on the inside we will be natural tools and natural implements.

Sharing the gospel with someone in your periphery will be the most natural thing in the world. And many of us have already had that experience. And you don't have to go out and look for a victim and slam them up against the wall in the airport and stick a tract in their hand and say, you're going to hell.

It's the most natural thing in the world. And God the Holy Spirit will orchestrate and put someone who is able to communicate that truth with someone who's hungry for it. And you won't be bothering people and driving them away from Christ because you picked the wrong time and the wrong place because you were interested in establishing your own righteousness.

We can relax. We can be at peace. We can live as normal people.

We can mind our own business, work with our own hands and let God determine the place and the time where He will use our spiritual gift. He will produce divine good that really counts. And it's a great thing because we can relax.

We don't have to run down and donate a diaper to the crisis pregnancy center and so forth. You might end up doing that but it's not going to be because someone said you need to. It'll be because you've got a closet full of diapers that you don't need anymore and here's a good place for them to go.

And your motivation will be right. And that's the Christianity that Paul is teaching us about here. So from a rather abstract principle, the law applies to those who are under the law.

We wind up with a very practical truth. Righteousness doesn't come by following a code of what's good and bad. Righteousness comes by letting God transform your thinking.

We can go to chapter 6 verse 3. This is getting close to where we have recently been. Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? This is not talking about getting dunked or sprinkled or effused or whatever. This is the baptism of the Spirit that took place when we accepted Christ.

We were identified with Christ in His death. Well this sounds like some theology, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, positional truth, retroactive positional truth, etc. When Christ died, we died.

That's great. So what? What difference does that make now? Well, Paul takes that abstract theological truth and he says here's the difference now. Here's the difference today.

And if you look at this section here, down in verse 9, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more, death no longer has dominion over Him. The death that He died, He died to sin once for all. But the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Likewise, you also reckon yourself dead to sin. It makes a difference. We're going to see this when we get into chapter 7 especially.

Death makes a difference. Death breaks the authority of the law. Death breaks the authority of sin.

Death is a big deal in God's plan and that's why you have death all the way through. In the day that you eat the fruit, you will surely die, God told Adam and Eve. What is this whole thing with death? Death makes a big difference in God's plan.

Because we've been identified with Jesus Christ and His death, that death broke the power of the law, it broke the power of sin, and because we've been identified with Christ, we are not under that authority. You don't have to go back and look at the diet that the Israelites had and throw out

all your bacon and throw out all your ham and not eat seafood and shellfish and so forth. We're not under that.

Why? It's not because we've got better hygiene and refrigerators and so forth. It's because Christ died. Don't let anyone tell you you're still under the law.

Don't let anybody tell you you ought to be a Seventh-day Adventist and go to church on Saturday because that's what the law of Moses says. When Christ died, we died with Him and death breaks the power of the law. We'll see that in chapter 7. Death broke the power of a marriage.

The law said if you're married, you stay married. Your husband, if you're a woman, your husband has authority. Boy, is that an unpopular concept, but that was the plan of God and that was the Mosaic Law.

When a woman married a man, she was transferred from the authority of her father to the authority of her husband, and it was a transfer. Until she got married, she was under the authority of her father. If her father died, she was under the authority of her older brother, and it was a means of protection.

It was a means of provision. It was a means of sustenance. The family, the men in the family, had an obligation before God to care for and nurture, protect and provide for every woman under their roof.

And no woman was left without that provision, and it was a command of God. And it was supposed to be a beneficial thing. It wasn't a way to put them under the thumb and denigrate them.

It was to provide, and it was a very beneficial system. And God says, when you marry the husband, he now has the authority and he has that responsibility. There's never authority without responsibility.

If the husband has authority, he has responsibility. And if he can make the decisions in the household, and if he's accountable before God for those decisions, that's authority, but he also has responsibility. He's going to take the heat at the judgment seat if he makes the wrong decision, or if he doesn't take good care of his wife, if he doesn't provide, if he doesn't make the investment of time and resources and so forth, that that responsibility requires.

It's a privilege to have authority, but there's a weight of responsibility equal to, and sometimes greater than, any pleasure you might get out of that authority. Well, that's something that comes from this principle that is communicated here in chapter 6, verse 3. We were identified with Christ in his death, so now we ought to identify with him in his new life. He's out from under the authority of the law, and so are we.

And don't let anybody drag you back under the law. You died, and death dissolved marriages

under the law, and death dissolves the obligation to the law. Chapter 6, verse 16, same thing.

Do you not know that whoever you present yourself to as a slave, you are that one slave? Now, there's kind of a self-evident truth. If you act like a slave, you are a slave. What's the application of that? Don't act like a slave to sin, because it's going to make you a slave.

You're going to have all of the bad experiences that a slave has. Rulership by the master, abuse by the master, and so forth. If you don't want to be a slave, don't act like a slave.

How do we get out from under the slavery to sin? Jesus said, You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. And he was talking about this divine truth that is revealed. It's looking at this truth and making it the object of our faith that sets us free from the law of sin and death.

But we have to take advantage of it. If we continue to act like a slave, we'll be one. My sister had a pet rabbit when she was a little girl.

She named it Terrazar, but we called it Fred. And it lived in a cage. And he had been born in a cage.

He'd been raised in a cage. My sister kept him in a cage. Well, it was a beautiful spring day.

The clover was out and the grass was green and hadn't been mowed lately. And Denise got the great idea, I'm going to take the rabbit and set him in the grass. Let him eat some clover.

Let him hop around a little bit, get some exercise. He was kind of flabby. And so she took him out of his cage, took him over on the other side of the driveway.

Nice green grass, beautiful clover. Set him down there and backed off a little bit. We figured we could catch him.

He wasn't very fast. And he didn't move. Minutes went by.

Several minutes went by. And he just sat there. And he didn't move.

He didn't hop around. He didn't explore. He wasn't in a cage anymore.

But he didn't know what it was like to be out of a cage. So he acted like he was in a cage. And he just didn't move.

Didn't see his water bowl nearby. And he just didn't move. That's the failure that we can make if we don't realize that we've been freed from slavery to sin.

We can act like we're still slaves to it. And there's no reason. What changes our mind? Well, if you take the rabbit and drag him around and say, hey, look, no bars, no cage.

You can move around. You give him a new piece of information. He can take advantage of that.

That's what God's Word does. It shows us the power of God. It gives us the power of God so that we don't live like slaves.

And we don't have to act on every impulse. And we don't have to be miserable because we wake up feeling miserable. Or we don't have to get depressed because someone says something or does something and makes us depressed.

We're free from that. And yet a lot of times we don't know it. We don't take advantage of it.

So these abstract theological truths make a big difference. I'll just quickly list these others. We won't look at each one in detail.

Chapter 7, verse 1 says, the law is binding in life and that authority is broken in death. And it gives the illustration of a marriage. What's the application of that? We are free because we've been associated with Christ's death.

We're free from the law. Don't let anybody lay on you some standard of behavior and say you've got to do this to be acceptable or you've got to do this to be good. You don't.

You don't have to do anything to impress anyone except God through Jesus Christ. We are free from all of that because Christ died. Chapter 7, verse 14, we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal, sold under sin.

We'll save that for when we talk about chapter 7 because Paul is talking about something that pertained in the past. Chapter 8, verse 22, we know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail. Ever since Adam fell and the thorns and the thistles and the lions grew teeth and became carnivorous and everything else, creation has been suffering because of the fall.

We know that. So what? There's going to be a day when the creation is restored and the thing that put it in bondage is going to be gone and that corruption that we experience and that we labor under will also be gone and we ought to look forward to that day. It ought to be a strong motivation and that day is coming soon.

Chapter 8, verse 28, this is one of the famous verses in Romans, we know that all things work together for good. Is there a period at that point? Everything works together for good. You hear it quoted that way a lot.

It's not so. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Do we love God by nature? Do you walk up and meet someone and you love them from the heart and deeply? We don't.

How do we come to love someone? You get to know them. You find out about them. You learn

about their, the way they think and their sense of humor and their likes and dislikes and their personality and so forth.

We come to love God the very same way. We know Him. We learn what He has revealed and He becomes a person instead of a concept.

He's not some vague, judgmental abstract in the sky. He's a person and He made us in His image. We have a sense of humor.

God has a sense of humor. God enjoys surprising us with blessings. God enjoys irony in life where we think that the roof is about to cave in and instead we are buoyed up in a grander way than we could ever imagine.

God loves to do that. He delights in it. And when we learn about Him that makes a difference in our own life.

So all things work together for good. What is the application? We need to be in that category. We need to be those who love God and to do that we have to find out about Him.

We have to get to know Him a little bit. Spend some time talking to Him. Spend some time letting Him talk to us like we're doing tonight.

And when we do we will find out that God is for us. And if God is for us what is possibly going to stand against us? If the God of the universe is on your side and He's your Father and you're His child and He says I want you in my plan. I want you to be blessed.

I want you to have peace and joy and so forth. If that's God's attitude toward us what is going to stand in the way of the God of the universe? Nothing. And it's a great thing.

And we can look around and say well it looks like everything is a shambles. It looks like everything is a wreck. But the God of the universe is on my side.

I'm talking to Him. He's talking to me. We're in great shape.

It's a big application there. And you can find this we'll see this as we go through the rest of the book in chapter 10 verse 19. Did not Israel know some of these things? Paul goes back and talks about Israel in chapter 10 and chapter 11 of Romans.

He says didn't Israel know a lot of these truths? They did. What was the problem with Israel? Like it says in Hebrews the promises of God were not mixed with faith. They didn't believe it.

Paul is going to tell us in chapter 10 of Romans the Israelites had all of this knowledge. Prophets and the priests and everybody communicated this truth but they didn't take advantage of it. We don't want to fall into that trap.

Why drop in the wilderness when you can go into the land of Canaan? That's the choice that faces us. We have a great opportunity. It requires no skill.

It requires no special circumstances no special training. All it takes is recognizing that God's got a plan and saying let's find out about it. Let's take advantage of that truth and make it our reality and act accordingly.

It is so simple that 99% of Christianity has missed it. We've made Christianity into a religion. We've made it into a law.

We've made it into a system of works. We've made it into a system whereby we can evaluate and judge each other. It's a terrible abuse and it drives people away from Christ.

It's such a wonderful beautiful way to live and the power of God can be in our life and our life can have meaning now and it can have meaning that lasts for all eternity. When God goes back and looks through the box and pulls out the letters and the pictures from our life it'll mean something. It'll be a memorial to the grace of God and a memorial to the glory of God and the righteousness of God that will shine for all eternity.

What greater opportunity could you have than to make a mark that will last forever? That's the opportunity that we have and that's what Paul is wanting to get across to us when he uses these terms we know. Do you not know? We know these things. Because we know these things it ought to make a difference.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank You for Your grace and including us in Your plan and creating us and putting us in this unique and wonderful place of opportunity. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take the truth that we've seen from Your Word and will make it real to us and help us to see the opportunities in our daily life when we're doing the routine things in our day and taking care of our normal responsibilities that we have the opportunity to convert those ordinary things into extraordinary places to reflect Your glory.

Extraordinary places to be declared righteous because we do them out of a desire to please You. We do them in a way that brings glory to You rather than out of our own goals and our own desires. We pray that these things will transform us will renew our minds will motivate us and encourage us and that we will be in that place where we can enjoy the peace that comes from You the joy and the blessing that comes from You that transcend anything that we can ask or think and we pray these things in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ through whom we have access to Your grace.

Amen.