

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Lecture 15, Romans and Intro. to 1 Corinthians

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament History and Literature, Lecture 15, Romans and the Introduction to 1 Corinthians.

All right, last week we ended by talking a little bit about the way we read Romans as a whole and kind of what is the main theme or message of Romans, and I suggested that probably a combination of what is often called the old and the new perspective. The old perspective is that Romans talks about how individuals are saved or how they stand before a holy God, whereas the new perspective says, no, the main issue is how do Jews and Gentiles relate to each other, what is required to belong to the people of God, the focus was more horizontal.

I suggested that probably both are true in a book like Romans, that Paul is interested in the issue of Jew-Gentile relationship, what is required of those who belong to God's people, must Gentiles submit to the law of Moses or can they be God's people apart from that.

And that though relates to and raises a broader issue of on what basis then does one enter into a relationship with God or on what basis is one saved and what basis does one stand before a holy God, which is the question that Martin Luther was raising. But I want to begin to look at a little more detail at a couple of sections of the book of Romans, and first of all is to note how in a sense the book is set up and how it argues its point, is first of all, Paul's argument can be seen as beginning with what some have termed a diagnosis, that is in the first three chapters Paul demonstrates, or basically Paul accuses all of humanity, both Jew and Gentile. I should actually say it the other way around, Gentile and Jew, because most readers, especially Jewish readers, would not have been surprised at Paul's accusation of and condemnation of Gentiles, but when Paul gets to Jews as well and says that they also are guilty because they have disobeyed the law, most would have maybe been rather surprised at that.

But what Paul does in roughly the first three chapters is accuse both Gentiles and Jews of standing condemned under sin, and the reason that is the case is because both disobey the law, and especially Jews disobeying the law of Moses, but because of disobedience all stand condemned.

But the diagnosis then leads to the prognosis, again as some have called it, is God has acted to address this problem and to correct this problem by offering a righteousness, we'll talk more about that term righteousness or justified justification in just a moment, but by offering a righteousness that is available to them only

through faith in Jesus Christ. So, the kind of the watershed, this should actually be chapter 3 verse 21, it's actually at 21 one of them, at least thematically, one of the dividing lines in the letter where Paul moves from diagnosing the problem or accusing all humanity to now offering the solution to that predicament because of sin. So, all are under sin because all disobey and all are enslaved to sin, even Jews, not just Gentiles, and therefore all stand in need of this righteousness that comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now to make it clear, to address one of the issues that we've been talking about, to make it clear that Paul is not some antinomian, that is that Paul thinks that faith in Jesus Christ is enough and that what one does after that really has no bearing at all, or that one's obedience to Jesus Christ is actually incidental or unrelated to one's faith in Christ. And there seems to be a propensity today among a lot of Christians to divorce our faith in Christ and become a Christian to what we do later, as if what we do later is unconnected to or unrelated to becoming a Christian or having faith in Jesus Christ. But Paul anticipates that perhaps in his argument in the prognosis section when Paul demonstrates there is a righteousness, this justification or right standing before God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

In the middle of that, in chapter 6, Paul anticipates a possible objection to, in fact, that very thinking, well, if we're justified by faith in Jesus Christ, then any subsequent activity or any subsequent obedience is really immaterial or inconsequential. Or does Paul's teaching that we're justified only by faith necessarily mean therefore that obedience to a law or any law plays no role whatsoever? Paul anticipates that and says in chapter 6, he says, what then shall we say, should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? So, if we're saved only by God's grace and through faith, then actually sin should cause God's grace to abound all the more. But Paul says, by no means, or some of your translations may say, God forbid, how can we who die to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead to the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

So, what Paul ends up saying, though, is this righteousness that only comes from faith is inconsequential if it doesn't issue in a new life, because by virtue of faith in Christ, Paul says, we are in some way joined to Christ, which means we share in his death, a death to sin, but we also share in his resurrection, which is a resurrection that enables us to walk in a new quality of life. So, Paul's saying it's simply inconsistent, and not even that, it's unthinkable that one would experience this righteousness by faith in Christ, yet not live a new life, or a transformed life. So, Paul makes it very clear throughout his letter that good works do play a role, and that good works clearly mark one out as the people of God.

Good works clearly demonstrate the reality of one's faith in Jesus Christ. If one has truly exercised faith in Christ, and one has received this righteousness that God gives, this right standing, then inevitably that person will walk in newness of life, to use Paul's very language. Now one of the key sections, or one of the important sections in chapter 3, in the second section, as Paul begins to introduce the solution, or the prognosis, is in chapter 3 and verses 21 through 26, which in some respects could function, as some have labeled it, not only as the heart of Paul's letter to the Romans, but the heart of the gospel that Paul preaches, period.

Here's how verse 21 begins in chapter 3, and this is the beginning of the prognosis section. So, Paul has just demonstrated that both Gentile and Jew stand condemned under sin because of their failure to obey, and now he says, starting in verse 21, but now, apart from the law, that is the law of Moses, the righteousness of God has been revealed, and is attested by the law and the prophets. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe, for there is no distinction since all have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

They are now justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation or a sacrifice of atonement. Your translations may differ a little bit there in verse 25, which God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement or a propitiation by His blood, that is the death of Christ, effective through faith. God did this to show His righteousness because, in His divine forbearance, He had passed over sins previously committed, probably those sins committed under the Old Covenant in the Old Testament.

But it was to prove at the present time that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. Now, let me just make a number of comments on this section that, as I said, could be described as the heart of the Gospel, and at least the heart, in a sense, the heart of Paul's letter. It seems that most of the rest of Romans will unpack the significance and the implications of 3.21-26, those verses that I just read.

But first of all, notice that Paul offers a righteousness apart from the law. This is probably to be understood again or can be understood from both old and new perspectives. That is, this righteousness does not come by law-keeping, by human ability to keep the law, and neither is this righteousness then, according to the new perspective, it's not restricted to Jews only.

But now, since it no longer has to do with the law, it is open to Gentiles as well. So, there's a righteousness that comes that is now available that is not tied in with obedience to the Mosaic law. And again, almost all the time when Paul uses the word law, except for maybe a couple of instances, virtually every time you see Paul using the word law, he's primarily referring to the Old Testament law, the law of Moses.

And here he says it no longer plays a role in one's standing before God in righteousness. So, therefore, Jews and Gentiles can participate in this on an equal level. One of the terms that Paul uses, actually there are two terms that Paul uses to describe what Jesus Christ has done in providing this righteousness.

Now this assumes, again we're assuming what Paul has argued in the first three chapters. Paul is assuming that everyone has followed his argument that everyone, Gentile and Jew, stands in bondage to sin. We're all guilty of sin and therefore stand in bondage to sin and death.

And therefore, presumably, the argument is they need to be rescued from that, or that situation needs to be addressed and it needs to be fixed. And Paul's solution is that has been done by this righteousness that comes through the death of Jesus Christ. So, the assumption is here the death of Jesus Christ deals with this problem of sin in the first three chapters.

And the way Paul shows that is by using two metaphors. I've actually only listed one here, but the first one is in verse 24, the word redemption. Paul says Jesus' death redeems us or provides redemption for his people who are described in the first three chapters as condemned under sin and in bondage to sin.

So, Jesus Christ's death provides redemption. This metaphor is one that probably, as most have recognized, comes out of slavery or marketplace imagery, and that is Jesus' death is seen as... There may be two ideas. The dominant idea is it frees from slavery.

So, Jesus' death is seen as freeing us from slavery. In this case, it's not slavery to physical masters, but sin is seen as that which we're in bondage to. So Jesus Christ's death redeems us or provides redemption.

In verse 24, he says through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that is the freedom from slavery, the rescue. And this probably also recalls the Exodus back in the Old Testament. The Exodus was seen as redemption or freedom from bondage and slavery by the Egyptians.

So now the freedom from bondage, Paul describes, is the bondage to sin that he's described all under, everyone being under in the first three chapters. So that's the first image or metaphor, redemption. The second one, again in verse 25, if anyone has a translation open, do you have propitiation? Does anyone have propitiation in your translation? You don't find that as much anymore.

Most of you will have a sacrifice of atonement. The reason for that is both of those translations go back to a Greek word that there's a little bit of dispute as to exactly

what it means. The idea of sacrifice of atonement simply means that Jesus' death takes away or removes sin.

So, by saying here in verse 25 that Jesus' death was a sacrifice of atonement, again, it may be calling Old Testament imagery that Jesus' death now cleanses from sin or removes sin. But another possibility is some have proposed that we should translate verse 25 as Jesus' death was a propitiation. Now, that's not a word that we use in our common vocabulary.

Probably sacrifice of atonement isn't really either, but most of us have heard the word atonement in our theological discourse. But propitiation is one that's in some respects fallen off the map and is not as common to use to describe Jesus' death. But what that means, the idea of propitiation is that Jesus' death was a satisfaction of or actually averted and turned away God's wrath.

And that has support in that if you go back here to this section, verse 18. Verse 18 begins, Now the wrath of God is revealed against all sin and against humanity. So, the idea of God's wrath as His reaction, His response to sin as a holy God is present in the book of Romans.

So, it's likely that along with the sacrifice of atonement, Paul probably does think in terms of propitiation. That is, in chapter 1, verse 18, The wrath of God has been revealed. Now Jesus' death, by satisfying God's demands and His holy demands, now averts and turns that wrath away from humanity.

So that's the idea behind a propitiation if you have a translation that says propitiation. And again, I don't know that we have to rule out either of those, that Jesus' death is a sacrifice of atonement. It removes sin, it cleanses sin, but also in a sense, it's a propitiation in that it averts and turns away God's wrath by providing the sacrifice of atonement for sin.

There's another idea here as well behind this word that could be translated as a sacrifice of atonement or propitiation. In the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, remember going back to Alexander, just a little bit of background. Alexander, the general that spread Greek culture and Greek language, which is called Hellenism, necessitated sooner or later a Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was originally written in Hebrew, that Greek translation is commonly referred to as the Septuagint for various reasons, or the Roman numerals LXX for 70.

And I won't go into all the reasons why that's the case, but the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, actually uses the same word that Paul does here for the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant that was found in the temple, the place where atonement takes place. So, it's possible then that Paul also had in mind

the fact that Jesus Christ, what took place at the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant in the temple, now is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. So, it's another way of Paul saying Jesus Christ brings to fulfillment all the images and the promises and all the events, et cetera, of the Old Testament.

So, again, it's probably I don't think that we necessarily have to rule out any of those. Again, I don't want to be a sloppy thinker and say, well, I can't decide, so I'll take them all. That's not appropriate either.

But all those notions certainly fit and have their background in the Old Testament and even in the broader Greek world. Jesus' death as a sacrifice of atonement, it removes sin, it wipes away sin, but it also is a propitiation. It satisfies God's wrath.

It averts it, turns it from humanity, and at the same time, Jesus is the mercy seat, the place where this atonement takes place. He's the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system. All right.

But this section, interestingly, in chapter 3 verses 21 through 26, this heart of the gospel section, is not just about Jesus and his death, but it also is about God and his justice and the righteousness or justice of God. Notice, I want you to notice, let me read again verses 25 and 26. So, God put Jesus forward, he presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, propitiation, and a mercy seat, because in God's divine forbearance, he had passed over sins previously committed.

But this was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous or he himself is just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. So, Paul is raising the question, not just about what did Jesus do to make sinners right, those who have been in bondage to sin, but how does God make them righteous? Well, he does so through Jesus Christ. But this is also wrapped up with God's justice and righteousness.

And the question that Paul seems to anticipate in verse 26 is, how can God make these people righteous, yet still himself be just and righteous? How can God make sinners righteous, yet still maintain his own holiness and righteousness? I think, sometimes I wonder if we don't implicitly think that when it comes to the New Testament and the Gospel, what God does is he lowers the standard. So, the standard is impossibly high. That's perfection, perfect obedience, and reflection of God's character.

But the Old Testament shows that no one could measure up. So, in a sense, God lowers the standard and says, instead, I'll accept you based on faith and grace. So, we'll kind of waive the requirements.

So, all you have to do is believe and trust in God's grace and you can get in. So, it's as if God lowers the standards because we couldn't meet them in the Old Testament. No one could live up and measure up.

So, God had to kind of change the criteria so that now it's not based on keeping the law and perfection, but now it's based solely on God's grace and through faith. That is precisely what Paul is not saying, is that the standards and criteria are not changed one bit. It's just that now Paul is convinced they are met through Jesus Christ.

It's by providing Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sin to remove it and by God sending Christ to be a propitiation to avert and satisfy his wrath and to be this mercy seat where sin is dealt with. On that basis, God can justify those who are in bondage to sin without himself failing to be righteous and just. In other words, God does not compromise his righteous character and his holy character.

God does not change the criteria or lower the standard. Instead, he meets the standard through the person of Jesus Christ, by providing Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins, and by dealing with the problem of sin. God can justify sinners.

This was at the heart of some Martin Luther's thought. God can justify those who are in bondage to sin, chapters 1 through 3, yet God still remains just. In fact, if God lowered the standards or if God changed the criteria or made it easier, he would cease to be God.

He would cease to act according to his just and righteous character, but that's what God has not done. God has still maintained his righteousness and acted justly according to his righteous character, yet he can still declare righteous or make righteous those who are sinners in bondage to sin. Why? The primary factor is the person of Jesus Christ.

And his sacrificial death on the cross, his death as an atonement, as a propitiation, as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system. Good. So, this section has just as much to say about the justification of God, that God provides salvation in a way that does not compromise his own justice and righteousness and his own character.

All right? Good. Any questions about that section? That's, I think, a crucial section. Well, we've mentioned the word righteousness or justification a number of times, and that's because it occurs in Romans a number of times.

And the term justification is an important one in Romans and the book of Galatians as well. And so, it's important to ask, well, what is meant by justification? Because often when, at least today in our English language, if we refer to justifying something, we often think of providing a rationale or a reason for doing something.

So, if I justify my behavior, I demonstrate why I'm right in doing that or providing a reason or rationale for my behavior.

But the word justification or righteousness throughout Romans often reflects a legal background. And there may be some other backgrounds, such as the covenant from the Old Testament. But I'm convinced the primary background that Paul draws upon is the courtroom, the law court from both the Old Testament but also the Greco-Roman world.

And that is God is being portrayed as the judge of all the world and humanity, again, humanity has violated its relationship with this God, that humanity has sinned against God and therefore stands guilty before God who is the judge of the world. And so, God then, again, we said God must find a way to make that right and to provide a way to enter into a right relationship to vindicate those people of their sin, yet still maintain his own righteousness to justify himself. And so the meaning, especially when it refers to God's people, the meaning of justification is to declare someone in a right relationship or to declare someone innocent or to vindicate.

So, Paul's idea is those who have sinned and who are in bondage to sin in chapters 1 through 3 can actually then be declared righteous or justified, meaning that they are declared innocent or they are vindicated. The sole basis of that vindication is the work of Christ on the cross and I would argue also his resurrection. Sometimes justification is linked to Jesus' resurrection as well.

So, through his death and the resurrection, we are vindicated, we are declared innocent, and enter into a right standing, a right relationship before God. There may be some other nuances with that, but I think primarily that's what Paul is getting at with the justification, and righteousness language throughout Romans. Now before we go on and move on to 1 Corinthians, again to kind of summarize, at the heart of much of Romans is a demonstration both that Jew and Gentile can now become the true people of God and that the law no longer plays a role.

So, Jew and Gentile both can belong to the true covenant people of God. Yet that also raises the issue of the fact that both Jew and Gentile then although standing guilty before God because of sin can be vindicated and declared righteous based not on keeping the law but based on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as a sacrifice of atonement, as a propitiation. And the rest of Romans simply elaborates and spells out what that means.

Now, Romans is a good place to kind of introduce you to Paul's thoughts. That is, there are a number of things that we find in Romans that will actually crop up elsewhere in Paul's letters. And I think if we can understand them correctly, we'll have an easier time understanding these when they appear elsewhere.

And this is the first, this is another excursus in your notes. And the first thing to say is that Paul, actually the rest of the New Testament but since we're focusing on Paul, Paul shares with Jesus this idea of the already but not yet. Remember we talked about that in relationship to the kingdom? And again, I said if you're sleeping in my class, which God forbid you'd ever think of doing that, but if you were and I woke you up and asked you a question if you said already but not yet, you'd have about a 90% chance of being right, probably.

And that's not because I've made it important, but because it is all over in the New Testament. The New Testament assumes this. But we said with Jesus, when Jesus preached the kingdom of God, He was actually offering the kingdom that the Old Testament prophets predicted would come in the future.

Jesus Christ, at His first coming, offered it and said men and women can enter God's kingdom and experience God's rule that was promised to David right now in the present. Yet, it's only arrived in part. It still awaits its future consummation.

It has not yet come to its perfection and fullness. So that tension between what is already true but only in part and what has yet to come in full. That tension also crops up all over in Paul.

A tension between what has already been accomplished through Jesus Christ and what is now a present reality, but what has yet to reach its consummation and fullness in the future. So, for example, there's another reason I read Romans 6 to you. If I can go back and read Romans 6 again, the already side of the tension in Paul refers to what is already true of us by virtue of belonging to Jesus Christ.

And sometimes Paul makes some rather absolute statements. To go back to Romans 6, notice how he begins. He says, Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? Now listen to this.

He says, By no means. How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Now that's a rather absolute statement. Paul says We have died to sin.

But how can he say that? Well, it's because he's speaking of the already side of the tension. By virtue of belonging to Christ, we have already died to sin. By sharing in Christ's death, we have already experienced a death to sin.

Yet obviously, I'm still alive. Physically, I'm still alive. And the last time I checked, I think most of us would admit that we still sin.

So, the not-yet side of the tension is what we have still yet to become. What we have not yet arrived. And this is reflected.

So, notice, Paul can on the one hand say that how can we who died to sin go on living in it any longer? That's an absolute statement. It sounds like it's nothing less than perfection. We've died to sin and we can't live in it.

But now, listen to what Paul says just a few verses later. Starting in verse 11. you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Therefore, do not let sin reign or exercise dominion in your mortal bodies. I thought he said we already died to sin. Why does he have to command us now not to let sin reign? It's part of this tension.

So, Paul can talk rather absolutely we've died to sin by virtue of belonging to Christ. That's the already. But the not yet is we still haven't arrived.

The not-yet, the future consummation, has not yet arrived. So, the not-yet requires that Paul gives us these commands. Yes, we've already died to sin.

But because of the not yet, because it's still not a perfect consummated reality, Paul says but you still have to put sin to death. You still struggle with sin. You still live in this present evil age.

You still live in a time when God's kingdom has not arrived in its fullness. Therefore, you have to put sin to death in practice. So, this idea will crop up all through Paul's letters and I'd suggest the rest of the New Testament as well.

And again, it helps you to make sense of some rather contradictory or apparently contradictory statements. Again, Paul can say something like you've died to sin and you've been raised with Christ. Well, how then can he say that you need to put sin to death and you need to live as if you're walking in newness of life?

It's part of that already but not yet tension. Another key feature related to this is Paul understands humanity and actually understands our existence in terms of two spheres. These circles are not meant to indicate any physical location or geographical or a point on a map or something that one can identify.

These circles are just meant to represent a reality or a sphere of influence, a sphere of control. Paul understands and again, you can see the tension between the already but not yet operating here. Paul understands basically that there are two humanities or that humanity can be divided up into these two spheres or two spheres of influence or control.

The one sphere that Paul often calls the old person or old self or old man some of the translations might have. The old man is basically a reference to who we are in Adam

the first human being who plunged us into sin. Read Romans chapter 5 where Paul discusses that.

In Adam, we belong to humanity we are part of an existence a sphere a sphere of influence or power that controls us. This sphere is dominated and controlled by sin and death. Interestingly we'll refer to this more when we get to Galatians Paul would put the Old Testament law here as well though Paul wants to make clear the law isn't at fault. The law isn't evil or sinful. It's what humanity has done with it.

But the one I want to focus on is sin and death so all humanity in Adam the old self when Paul talks about the old person it's not some ontological part of my being or who I was just before I became a Christian. The old person is who I was in the sphere of and under the influence of Adam dominated and characterized by sin and death.

Then when Paul talks about the new person or the new self or new man it refers now to being transferred to a new realm a new sphere of influence and power where Christ is the head. It's characterized by a righteous life and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

So, Paul understands kind of these two inclusive humanities with their two respective heads Adam and Christ. Adam's the humanity under Adam is within the realm and sphere of power of sin and death. Those in Christ are within the realm and sphere of influence of righteousness life and under the power of God's Holy Spirit. So, that's very important to understand all through his letters Paul is going to operate with this. Again, these two kinds of humanities or spheres of influence.

And again, you can see the already but not-yet tension Paul can make absolute statements. We've already been transferred into this realm so that's why Paul can say you've already died in Christ. You have already you are already righteous, you are already righteous, you already have received life. However, there's still a sense in which this exerts influence.

And so, Paul says there but you still need to put to death that's the not-yet part. This is in a sense this isn't completely accurate but in a sense, the transfer has not been completely finalized. Yet the transfer is not has not been consummated or perfected and that's why we the not-yet is why the commands are still necessary.

So old person/new person is to be seen as two spheres, two realms of influence with Adam and Christ as the heads and characterized by these features that dominate.

Another way before I go on, let me back up, what does it mean to be in Christ? One of the most common expressions throughout Paul's letters is in Christ or in him. Paul talks about us being in him we have we are justified in Christ we have salvation in Christ. Christians are said to be we're in him we're in Christ. What does that mean? It

means to be within the control of or within this realm this sphere that is with Christ as its head. I think that's what primarily what Paul means when he says we are in Christ is we're no longer in Adam. We no longer belong to this realm but now we belong to this realm where Christ is its head. It's characterized by a righteous life and God's Holy Spirit.

Another way to look at this tension again is between the tension between the indicative and the imperative. The indicative once again would correspond to the already. The indicatives are the statements and assertions Paul makes about who we are in Christ. Again, we are in Christ we have died to sin. We have already been justified, we have already been saved, we have died to sin, we have already risen to new life in Christ. Those are absolute statements that describe what is true by virtue of the fact that we are in Christ, that we belong to Christ.

The imperatives are the ethical injunctions and commands. Paul gives the imperative though reflects the not yet what we have not yet become or what we have yet to become in Christ. This is the not-yet part of the tension.

Again, go back to Romans 6 here's the indicative again notice the clear the absolute statements and assertions how can we who have died to sin go on living in any longer. So, we've died to sin and we no longer live in sin. Then Paul says for if we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly be united with him in his resurrection. We know that our old self, there's that phrase old self, we know that our old self was crucified. You notice that absolute statement the old self has been put to death. It's crucified period with him. So that's the body of sin.

Another way of I think saying the old self, the old man, so that the body of sin may be destroyed. So do you hear this absolute language is that our old self, who we are in Adam, within the sphere and realm of the control of Adam, and sin and death has been destroyed. It's been done away with however so those are the absolute statements and Paul adds and we've also been raised with Christ as well.

So those are the absolute statements but then Paul will turn around and qualify those again here's that was the indicative. Here's the imperative therefore do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies. Again, why would Paul have to say that if we've died to sin? It's back to that tension between the indicative imperative or the already/but not-yet so no longer Paul then says, no longer present your members to God as instruments of righteousness that's the imperative. What we have yet so yes we on the one hand we've died to sin the body of sin. The old self has been destroyed and we've been raised to new life by virtue of being joined with Christ. But that has not taken place ultimately and perfectly in its consummated form that's the not-yet.

Therefore Paul must give us the imperative side there's a process that one must then one must participate in acting out what is true by virtue of belonging to Christ now must be made a reality in one's life. Because the not-yet has not yet arrived. So that's why I said this the idea of the kingdom of God and Matthew being already the kingdom is already present, already a reality but has not yet arrived in its fullness.

Now, although he doesn't use kingdom language much of what Paul is saying is the same thing by using old self/new self being in Christ and that kind of language.

Again any questions about that this is a very important aspect of Paul's thinking? All right, what I want to do is then open another piece of the early church's mail. We just looked at briefly at a letter to a church in Rome. Now I want to look at a open another piece of the church's mail and will open up a letter addressed to or at least the first letter to a church in the city of Corinth.

This is just a picture of the ancient ruins of Corinth. Although I've never been there that's one of the first places I want to visit when I do finally get over there. But Corinth, Paul's letter to the Corinthian church has its background in Acts chapter 18 during one of Paul's missionary journeys. He actually spent 18 months, a year and a half, in the city of Corinth. He spent that time establishing a church and then later on at some point later now writes a letter back to the church because he's been made aware of a number of issues and problems that have arisen since he left Corinth. So again he spent a year and a half there planting this church. Now upon leaving and by various means hearing news of what's going on in Corinth, he now sits down and writes a letter to address a number of the problems and issues that have been taking place in the city of Corinth.

The city of Corinth was a very significant city. It's location alone if you remember actually at this time during the first century the Greek empire was divided into two parts Macedonia and Achaia are the two names of the two parts much like if you remember from the Old Testament survey the nation of Israel divided between Israel and Judah the divided kingdom. Well in a sense there were two kingdoms in Greece at this time one was Macedonia the other Achaia.

Corinth was the capital city of Achaia of the kingdom of Achaia and therefore was a very significant city in the first-century Greco-Roman world. The city of Corinth as well, the city of Corinth also was probably represented both the best and the worst from our perspective perhaps the best and the worst of Greco-Roman culture. It was known for its wealth. Financially Corinth had its share of elite wealthy individuals. It was a very prosperous city. Morally Corinth was often known some reports ancient reports might be a little bit over-exaggerated but was known for its sexual immorality. Like most other cities often equated with other religious and cultic

practices and worship and idolatry and worship in pagan temples and things like that at times.

So, but mostly I would suspect that if you were looking for a place to live in the first-century Greco-Roman world that Corinth would be in the top of your list. That's where all the activity was as you know Corinth boasted the Isthmian games which were second only to the Olympic games. So culturally financially Corinth was where it was at. It was the kind of place where I suspect that most people would enjoy living but at the same time all those all those elements also raised issues that Paul had to confront after he had established a church.

We'll talk about what those are in just a moment but before we before we the last thing I want to say today before we examine the letter itself on starting Wednesday is the last thing I want to say is to raise a question how many letters did Paul write to the Corinthians. Well, you say I look in my New Testament and I have 1st and 2nd Corinthians. So, he wrote two letters to the Corinthians. However, when you read 1st and 2nd Corinthians our 1st and 2nd Corinthians in the New Testament carefully you soon recognize that literally that 2nd and 4th Corinthians because 1st Corinthians both 1st and 2nd Corinthians refer each of them refer to a different letter, a separate letter that we do not have evidence of. 1st Corinthians 5:9 refers to a letter that Paul wrote before he wrote our 1st Corinthians. 1st Corinthians 5:9 I had it here just a moment ago. 1st Corinthians 5 and verse 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons and clearly since he hasn't said anything clearly Paul is referring to a letter that he had written before. So technically the letter he refers to in chapter 5 verse 1 is 1st Corinthians and then our 1st Corinthians is 2nd Corinthians.

Now the letter of 2nd Corinthians in our Bible what we call 2nd Corinthians, it also refers to a previous letter known as the severe letter a letter that Paul says he wrote to the Corinthians but apparently, we do not have any evidence of any longer. So technically we have a 1st Corinthians mentioned in chapter 5 verse 9 and then our 1st Corinthians is 2nd Corinthians and then 3rd Corinthians is this severe letter that we read about and then our 2nd Corinthians is actually 4th Corinthians.

My point is 1st and 2nd Corinthians are simply part of a much broader correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians. This makes it a little bit more difficult to figure out exactly what were the problems what were the issues that perhaps Paul and the Corinthians had already dealt with

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament History and Literature, Lecture 15, Romans and the Introduction to 1 Corinthians.