All right, let’s go ahead and get going. Let’s open with prayer first. Father, I pray now that You will help us to think sensibly and clearly about just a very minute part of Your revelation to us in the New Testament and the entirety of Scriptures. Lord, help us to increase our own ability to read it in light of the what You intended to communicate in the original context in which Your revelation was first given, and therefore being better able to comprehend how You continue to speak to us as Your people today. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Now, one of your colleagues up front said he smelled a quiz coming and he's right. All right, please hand those to the front, or to the side and then forward just so they end up here… thank you.

All right. Last week we ended by talking a little bit about the way we read Romans as a whole, and 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 being that Romans talks about how individuals are saved or how they stand before a holy God, or as a new perspective says, no, the main issue is how the Jews and Gentiles relate each other, what is required to belong to the people of God. The focus was more horizontal and 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 or on 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 the couple sections of the book of Romans. And first of all is to know how in a sense of 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've been rather surprised that. But what Paul does roughly in 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 disobeyed the Law, 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 justify, justification in just a moment—but by offering a righteousness that is available to them only through faith in Jesus Christ. So that cut of the watershed—this should actually be chapter 3, verse 21; it’s actually at 21—is one at least thematically, of the dividing lines in the letter were Paul moves from diagnosing the problem or accusing all humanity to now offering the solution to that predicament, because all are under sin because all disobey, and all are enslaved to sin—and 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 have been talking about: that to make it clear that Paul is not some antinomian; that is that Paul thinks that faith in Jesus Christ is enough, and that the what one does after that really has no bearing at all, or that, that one's obedience to Jesus Christ is actually incidental or unrelated to one's faith in Christ. There seems to be a propensity today among a lot of Christians to divorce of our
faith in Christ and becoming a Christian with 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 builds—he anticipates that in his argument that in the end, 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 in it—in anticipating a possible objection to impact someone thinking well if I were justified by faith in Jesus Christ than any subsequent activity or any subsequent obedience is really immaterial or inconsequential, or does Paul's teaching that we're justified only by faith—does that necessarily mean therefore that obedience to the Law, or any law, plays no role whatsoever? Paul anticipates that in chapter 6; he says “what then? Shall 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 died 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 the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” So what Paul ends up saying, 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, death to sin, but we also share in His resurrection, which is a resurrection that enables us to walk in the new quality of life.

So Paul’s saying it is 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; that is, a 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 a person will live or 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, is the second section as Paul begins to introduce the solution or the prognosis, is in chapter 3, in verses 21 to 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. 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 propitiation by His blood, that is the death of Christ, affective through faith. God does 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 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 through 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, from both old and new perspective—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, 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 instances—virtually every time you see Paul using the word “law” it is 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 Jew and Gentile can participate in this on an equal level.

One of the terms that Paul uses—actually, there’s two terms that Paul uses to describe what Jesus Christ has done in providing this righteousness. Now, this assumes what Paul has argued in the first three chapters—Paul is assuming that everyone has followed his argument, that everyone Gentile and Jew stand in bondage to sin, we are all guilty of sin, and therefore stand in bondage to sin and death. 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. Paul’s solution is that this 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. 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 that are described in the first three chapters as condemned under sin and in bondage to sin. So Jesus Christ’s death provides redemption. So this metaphor is one that probably is most recognized. It comes out of the slavery, or a marketplace imagery, and that is Jesus’ death is seen as it frees from slavery. So Jesus’s 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 are 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 to the Egyptians. So now the freedom from bondage Paul describes is the bondage of sin that he's described all under in the first three chapters. So that’s the first image or metaphor: redemption.

The second one, again in verse 25, if you have 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 it that 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” and again it may be calling Old Testament imagery, that Jesus’ death now cleanses from sin or removes sin. But another possibility is and 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 that means—the idea “propitiation” is that Jesus’ death was a satisfaction of, or actually [it] averted and turned away God's wrath, so—and that has support if you back here, to this section in 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 “sacrifice of atonement” Paul probably does think in terms of “propitiation”— that is chapter 1, verse 8: “the wrath of God has been revealed.” Now Jesus’ death, by satisfying God's demands and his holy demand, now averts and turns that wrath away from humanity. So that's the idea behind “propitiation”, if you have a translation that says “propitiation.” And again, I don't know we have to rule out either of those: that Jesus’ death is a “sacrifice of atonement”, it removes sin, but doesn’t cleanse sin, but also in a sense it's a “propitiation” that 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 “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 is the general who spread Greek culture and Greek language (which is called
Hellenism). That necessitated, sooner or later, a Greek translation of the Old Testament—which is originally written in Hebrew, and the Greek translation is commonly referred to as the Septuagint, for various reasons, or the Roman numerals LXX (for seventy). 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*, that 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 Jesus Christ. Now 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's saying Jesus Christ brings the fulfillment of all of the images and the promises and all the events, of the Old Testament. So again it's probably—I don't think that we necessarily have to rule out any of those. 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 that all those notions certainly fit in, and have their background in the Old Testament—and even in the broader Greek world, that of Jesus’ death as a sacrifice of atonement; it removes sin, wipes away sin, but it also is a propitiation: it satisfies God's wrath, averts it, turns it from humanity. 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 3:21-26, this heart of the gospel section. It is not just about Jesus and his death, but it also is about God and his justice, and the righteousness or justice of God. I want you to notice, let me read it again, verses 25 and 26: “so God put Jesus forward”—He presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, propitiation, 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 Jesus did 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. 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?

Sometimes I wonder if we don't implicitly think that when it comes to the New Testament and the Gospel, that what God does is he lowers the standard, so that this 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 standards and says instead “I’ll accept you based on faith and grace.” So we’ll, 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. He is not saying that the standards and criteria are not changed one bit, it's just that now Paul’s convinced they are met through Jesus Christ. It’s by providing Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins, to remove it, and by God sending Christ to be 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 this standard through the person of Jesus Christ, by providing Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins, by dealing with the problem of sin. God can justify sinners. This was a part at the heart of some of what Martin Luther taught: God can justify those who are in bondage to sin—chapters 1 through 3—yet God still remains just, because in fact if he 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 is 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, any questions about that section, and that's 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. So it's important to ask: What
is meant by justification? Often, at least today, in our English language, if we refer to
justifying something, we often think of providing a rationale or reason for doing
something. So if I justify my behavior, I demonstrate why I’m right in doing that work, or
providing a reason, the rationale, for my behavior. But the word *justification* or
righteousness throughout Romans often reflects a legal background; that is—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 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
God. Humanity has sinned against God and therefore stands guilty before God who is the
judge of the world. 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 resurrection we are vindicated, we are declared innocent, and enter into a right standing or 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-righteousness language throughout Romans.

Now, before we go move on to 1st Corinthians, again, to kind of summarize the heart of much of Romans is a demonstration, both that the Jew and Gentile can now become the one people, 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, 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 and the cross as a sacrifice of atonement, as a propitiation. 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 thought. That is, there are a number of things that we find in Romans that will actually crop up elsewhere in Paul's letters. I think if we can understand them correctly, we’ll have an easier time of understanding these when they appear elsewhere. 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. If you're sleeping in my class (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 have a lot of 90% chance of being right—probably. 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 in 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 comes and crops up all over in Paul. The tension is between what has already been accomplished through Jesus Christ and is now a present reality, but what has yet to reach its consummation and fullness in the future.

So for example, if I can—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 chapter 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 are 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. This is reflected, so notice Paul can on the one hand say how can we who die 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: “so you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God; therefore do not let sin reign or exercise dominion in your mortal bodies”. Well, 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 we can so 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, that Paul can say something like “you’ve died to sin, 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 a humanity, we are part of the existence, a sphere, a sphere of influence or power that controls us, and the 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. What Paul wants to make clear is that 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 under this, in the sphere
of and under the influence 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 sphere of influence and power where Christ is the head. It’s characterized by righteousness, 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. The humanity under Adam is within the realm and sphere of the power of sin and death, and those in Christ are in 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's going operate with these two kind 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 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 isn't completely accurate—but in a sense, the transfer has not been completely finalized yet, the transfer has not been consummated or perfected, and that's why we split the “not yet”; that's why the commands are still necessary. So the old person/new person are 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 then? One of the most common expressions throughout Paul's letters is “in Christ” or “in him.” Paul talks about us being in him, we are—we’re justified in Christ, we have salvation in Christ. Christians are said to be in him, we’re in Christ—what does that mean? It means to be within the control of—within this realm the sphere that has Christ as its head. I think that's 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 our head and characterized by righteousness, life, and God's Holy Spirit.

Another way to look at this tension again is the indicative and the imperative. The
indicative, once again—this 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 absolute statements that
describe what is true by virtue of the fact that we are in Christ and that we belong to Christ.
The imperatives are those 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 our Romans 6;
here’s the indicative. Notice the clear, the absolute statements and assertions. “How can we
who have died to sin go on living in it any longer?” So we’ve died to sin and we no longer
live in sin. And then Paul says, “for if we have 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, “we know that our old self was crucified”—you notice that absolute statement: the
old self had been put to death, it’s crucified. Period. “With him so that the body of sin”—
the body of sin is another way of saying the “old self”, the “old man”—“so that the body of
sin may be destroyed.” So do you hear this absolute language—it is that our old self, who
we are in Adam, within the sphere and realm of the control of Adam, and sin and death, that
has been destroyed. It's been done away with. However, those are the absolute statements,
and again Paul says that “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, that was the indicative;
here's the imperative: “therefore do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies”
Why would Paul have to say that if we died to sin? It’s back to that tension between the
indicative-imperative, or already but not yet. Paul then says: “no longer present your
members as to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those
who've been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of
righteousness.” That’s the imperative, what we have yet to do. Yes, 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 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 in Matthew the kingdom is already present, already a reality, but yet it has not yet arrived in its fullness. Now although he doesn't use kingdom language much, here’s Paul saying the same thing by using old-self/new-self, being in Christ. He uses that kind of language. Again, any questions about that? This is a very important aspect of Paul's thinking.

All right, then what I want to do is open another piece of the early church's mail. We just looked at briefly at a letter to a church in Rome, and now I want to open another piece of the church's mail. And we’ll 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 the 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 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, and spent that time establishing a church. Then later on, at some point he 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, and 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, at this time in the first century, the Greek empire was divided into two parts. It is Macedonia and Achaia are the two names of the two parts, that much like if you remember from Old Testament Survey, the nation of Israel divided between Israel and Judah; the divided kingdom. Well, in a sense there were two—there are two kingdoms in
Greece at this time. One was Macedonia; the other Achaia. Corinth was the capital city of Achaia, and therefore was a very significant city in the first century Greco-Roman world. The city of Corinth probably represented both the best and the worst from our perspective, the best and the worst of Greco-Roman culture. It was known for its wealth; financially there it had its share of elite wealthy individuals. It was a very prosperous city. Morally Corinth was often known though—some reports, ancient reports, might be a little bit over exaggerated, but [it] was known for its sexual immorality, like most other cities often equated with religious and occultic practices, and worship and idolatry and worship in pagan temples, and things like that at times. But 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 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. And it was the kind of place where I suspect that most people would enjoy living, but at the same time, all those elements also raised issues that Paul had to confront after he had established a church, and we'll talk about what those are in just a moment.

But the last thing I want to say today, before we examine the letter itself, starting Wednesday, the last thing I want to say is to raise a question: how many letters did Paul write to the Corinthians? You may say, “Well I look in my New Testament, and I have first and second Corinthians, so he wrote two letters to the Corinthians. However, when you read first and second Corinthians—our first and second Corinthians in the New Testament—carefully, you soon recognize that literally, that’s second and fourth Corinthians. Because both First and Second Corinthians refer to a different letter, a separate letter that we do not have evidence of. First Corinthians 5:9 refers to a letter that Paul wrote before he wrote our First Corinthians. First Corinthians 5:9—I had it here just a moments ago: “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons.” And clearly the lesson—since he hasn't said anything like that—clearly Paul is referring to a letter that he had written before. So technically the letter he refers to in chapter 5 verse
9, is First Corinthians, and then our first Corinthians is Second Corinthians. Now, the letter of—the letter of Second Corinthians in our Bible, what we call Second Corinthians—also refers to a previous letter, known as the “severe” letter, where Paul says he wrote the Corinthians, but apparently we do not have any evidence of [it] any longer. So technically, we have a First Corinthians mentioned in chapter 5 verse 9, and then our First Corinthians which is actually Second Corinthians, and then Third Corinthians is this “severe” letter that we read about, in our Second Corinthians which is actually Fourth Corinthians. My point is, First and Second Corinthians are simply part of a much broader correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians, which 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 or discussed, that Paul assumes that they know about.

All right, we’ll start there on Wednesday. We’ll look in more detail at what problems caused the writing of the letter to the Corinthians, and look at some of the text in more detail.