THE LETTERS OF PAUL E7 | NOVEMBER 1 2026 AM | JONATHAN SHANKS

Christ in Romans

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Widely respected as the most thorough treatment of New Testament truth ever written, penned through a scribe by the Apostle Paul while staying in Corinth, and coming after nearly 25 years of missionary service, today we come to the Book of Romans.

Our task today is to pick one passage, at least this was my task, one passage that represents the whole book, and I've chosen Romans 12. That's what we've been doing in this series we're in called Christ in Scripture.

One week on a whole book, that's a tall task when it comes to the Book of Romans. So we're in Chapter 12. I'll give you a moment to turn to Chapter 12.

Chapter 12, verse 1. Therefore I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy. Point number one is everything is different.

Everything is different. The therefore here is therefore an extraordinarily important reason. In the book of Romans, Paul is pivoting to a more practical teaching.

When he says in view of God's mercy, he's basically saying in view of the Christ in Scripture project, in view of the great story of redemption, God's plan of redemption which spans thousands of years.

In view, Paul is saying of everything I have taught in the book of Romans, he's saying in view of Romans 1, 18, which told us that God's wrath is coming on a planet that has been wracked with sin.

And it's coming on people because just creation itself is enough to bring us accountable before God because it's so glorious. In view of the Romans road, who knows the Romans road? Can you raise your hand?

A few people. I asked my Bible study I'm part of and no one could remember it. It's a very good thing to commit to memory for the gospel.

In view of the Romans road, Romans 3, 23. Someone want to yell out what that is? All sin and fall short of the glory of God.

That's a problem. There'll be a hint up behind us. Romans 6.

There's a problem because we've all sinned, because there's a consequence of sin. The wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So what do we do when we're stuck in sin? We've all sinned. The consequence of sin is death.

Romans 5.8. God demonstrates His own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Not when we tied everything up. Amen? While we were sinners, Christ died for us.

So what do I do? What's my response? Romans 10.9.

If you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Hallelujah.

The good news in view of God doing what he said he would do to save the world through the death and resurrection of his son, in view of the righteousness of God revealed, chapter one, in view of the wonderful, glorious, hope-filled good news of the

gospel, in view means comprehending, observing and understanding this good news. I'll never forget hearing a missionary named John come and speak years ago, of a time that he was in Malawi, he was a long-term missionary, and he was in the back of a

Ute, and he was telling the gospel to an African man who had never heard the gospel before. And he's telling the gospel over probably an hour of road trip in the back of this Ute.

And they got to their destination and he finished telling the story of what Christ had done. And he said, John, this is good news. It wasn't prompted, he never got told that this thing is called good news.

He just said, that's good news. And it is. It's incredible in view of the good news, of what God has done in Jesus.

What do we do?

Well, everything's different. And Paul says, in view of that, we're all in. We're all in.

Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship, all in. Last week, we talked about allegiance.

Do you remember the footy team analogy? And I asked Trotty, who's a St. George, he's one of our guitarists.

He's a St. George player. Red and white, his blood is red and white.

I said, would you change on Monday morning and put blue and yellow on and join Joel, who plays bass, who's a Parramatta supporter? And he just went, never. Because you don't change your allegiance.

And I would say to you that Paul wants to say, if allegiance to a footy team is here, allegiance to Christ because of what he's done is here, amen? And that's what Paul is talking about. Allegiance, because everything's different now.

Sin and death has been defeated. It's time to offer everything in worship. A living sacrifice is pretty obvious.

It's taken from the Old Testament, isn't it? Worship where an animal is tied to an altar and burnt. There's no turning back.

The holy and pleasing act of a full consecrated offering of one's life in worship is what we're called to give. Imagine you were given a car as a loan to use, and the car's parked out the front of your house, and it just sits there.

It's on loan for you to use, but the owner never gave you the car keys. So the car's just sitting there.

That's a little bit what it's like really when we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, but we don't give the keys to our kingdom, to God, and say, it's yours. It's all yours because of what Jesus has done.

Everything's different. We are all in. And Paul says it's time to think new.

Think new, do not conform to the pattern of this world, he writes, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.

I've got to say, I just enjoyed writing this sermon because every line is just so wonderful. It's so full of truth that's helpful for us. The word Paul uses here for transformed is the word metamorphuo.

And that's an interesting word. It's the same word that is used in Matthew 17 and Mark 9 at the transfiguration. Just think about that.

Isn't that interesting? The transfiguration where Jesus is transfigured into the likeness of someone from heaven, not just a man who is God, but a human. He was glorious, shining on the mountain.

That's the word that Paul says we are meant to become. We can be transformed from glory to glory. Well, our resident Hebrew scholar is Jack Long.

He's not here, but our resident Greek scholar is Benjamin Shanks. And I went into Ben's office this week and I said, what was it that you preached about Romans 12 that was so interesting a while ago? And he said, yeah, this is what it was.

The Greek word metamorphou can be grammatically parsed in five ways, all of which are super significant. It's in the present tense, that means to be transformed, be transformed, which means it's ongoing. It's not just a one-off thing.

Be transformed, metamorphou, in a lifelong process. It's in the passive voice, meaning transformation is not something we achieve, but that God does for us. That's good to know, isn't it?

God does it to us daily. It's in the imperative mood, meaning paradoxically, we are commanded to be transformed. But we can't do it in our own strength.

We need God to do it for us. It's in the second person, which means transformation happens in intentional disciple making relationships.

And finally, number five, it's in the plural number, which means transformation happens in community with others being transformed around us. Could you give Ben a little clap? That's good stuff.

It's amazing. Paul says, there is a formation. There is a formation that you could allow.

It's called being conformed to the pattern of this world. You could allow that. To not differentiate yourself from the culture of the world is to be conformed to the pattern of this world.

Paul says, don't do that. If you're a follower of Jesus, don't just go with the flow of society. Too much mercy has been shown to you.

Amen. Too much cost has been paid for you. And when you allow God to allow you to think new, Paul says, you'll be amazed at how clear things become.

You'll be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Paul says, humble thyself. He doesn't actually say thyself in the NIV, but I thought it sounded better.

For by the grace given me, he writes, I say to every one of you, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

The gospel should produce humility. It should. The Book of Romans is designed, if you read the Book of Romans, it's designed to humble any human.

Amen? The chapters leading up to 12 have rigorously and clinically established a foundation of truth that leads to the doxology of Chapter 11. Does that make sense?

You think of this rigorous and clinical unveiling of truth, it leads to what we just read before Chapter 12 begins. Paul wrote, I owe the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out. Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counsellor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay them?

For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

There is God and there is daylight and there is humanity. That's what Romans teaches. There is God and then just a long distance and then us.

We are to be humbled and live in humility. It's the only way we can be. But at the same time, Romans teaches us that we've been made in the image of God.

We've been made to steward the kingdom of God, though we are humble. We've been made to know the Father. Incredible stuff.

We've been entrusted with the gospel of God's righteousness. And as Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and went and washed feet, dirty feet, we've been called to live in humility. Humble thyself.

Paul says, with appropriate humility, step up. Step up. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members don't all have the same function, so in Christ, we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith. If it is serving, then serve.

If it is teaching, then teach. If it is encouragement, then give encouragement. If it is giving, then give generously.

If it is to lead, do it diligently. If it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. He's getting practical, isn't he?

Romans is such a dense theological book, but from chapter 12, he really becomes very practical.

The story of the Bible we have seen is a progressive unveiling of this wonderful plan of God to fill the church, the people of God, with His Spirit, and by His Spirit to enable them to do amazing things for the kingdom.

We've studied this in places like Joel, the promise of the Spirit to come and make manifest in a human being, by faith, the gifts of the Father in the believer's life. In Christ, Paul says, we form one body.

And in this living unit, we're spiritually empowered, morally purified, and faith remoulded. We live out the life of Jesus as though He was living His life in us, amen? This is the story of the good news.

So can I ask you today, in view of God's mercy, in view of His plan of redemption, in view of His desire to fill you with His Spirit, are you in the game of the kingdom? Or are you at this season of your life, on the bench? Are you in?

Are you in a place where you could say, I've stepped up by grace? Verse 6 says, we have different gifts according to grace given us. Now that just sort of flows over us.

You've heard that. It sounds quite Christian and Biblical. But think about it.

We have different gifts according to grace given us. The old question we've asked many times is a good question and pertinent. Now, the question is, who uses the most grace, the sinner or the saint?

Who uses the most grace, the sinner or the saint? The easy answer is the sinner, because you get saved by God's unmerited favour. But the biblical answer is the saint.

Saints use grace just constantly. Both need grace, but the saint uses, I think, more. Because all of life is a constant requirement to access grace for empowerment.

Amen? Grace for forgiveness, grace for spiritual gifting, grace for leading, and grace for encouragement. In a very practical way, can we be encouraged today?

Step up. There is enough grace for you and I. Get off the bench and step up.

Christ did too much for you to not be in and active in the kingdom.

Point number six is live love. Live love. Love must be sincere, Paul writes.

Hate what is evil, cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need.

It's interesting, I think, here. Paul just sort of goes for it, doesn't he, in plain language, describing what Christianity looks like at its best. We are to live love.

Elsewhere in the Bible, Paul says, pursue love above all else. Pursue love when we live love. Of course, our love must be sincere.

That's what he says. To be sincere is to be real, not fake, to be genuine. Can I ask you, how good is sincere love?

You've been loved. When you are loved by someone who is just giving it to you, they're not looking for something back. All I can say is it's a beautiful thing, amen?

To be loved. And we're called to do that. To love, to live love.

Paul says, hate what is evil. That's a strong word to find in the Bible, isn't it? Hate what is evil and cling to the good.

There's a battle going on sometimes here. Hate what is evil. Cling to the good.

Devote yourselves. That's intentionality, isn't it? Devote yourselves to loving others.

Devote yourselves to honouring others. Devote yourself to having a spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. I've always found that one, a interesting part of scripture.

Don't give up your spiritual fervour. Don't lose it. Be zealous for the glory of Jesus.

Live love. The goal of the Father is that the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of people by faith, and that we as his church are known by our love. Verse 12 of 12 says, Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. When I got diagnosed with a pretty awful health condition a couple of years ago, a godly family member of my wife's family gave her a piece of paper at some gathering, and it was a funny thing.

She just sort of snuck at this contraband, piece of paper that was scrumpled up, and she opened it up and it said, joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Maybe someone who is walking a walk of caring for loved ones needs to hear that today. By the grace of God, may you be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Live love, live love, that's it. In the name of Jesus, live love. Paul says, catalyse community, catalyse community.

Verse 14, bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse, because you people of God filled with the Spirit of God are different. Everything is different now.

You're all in. And the way we live is we live the way Jesus said we could live. We bless, we bless and we do not curse.

We rejoice with those who rejoice, because we have some discernment in these things, because we need to be ready to mourn with those who mourn. He says, live in harmony with one another.

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Catalyse community.

Do you know what a catalyst is? A catalyst, it's an interesting idea, I think. I learned surfing from my brother when I was a teenager.

And I realized pretty soon that as a teenager, you're not thinking clearly a lot of the time.

And so when you are walking with a six and a half foot board, you easily smash the tail on something hard, or you bash it on a rock and you get what's called a ding.

And you've got to, back in the day, you know, we would fix our own dings, surfboard dings. This was sort of before we found out that smelling too much fibreglass and stuff isn't great.

But back in the day, you learnt that there was fibreglass cloth which provided strength. There was resin which binds the cloth together and seals the repair. But it did nothing without what?

A catalyst. A small amount of catalytic material that caused the reaction to really take place and the resin to set. I will put it to you that community, the Christian community needs kingdom catalysts.

Kingdom catalysts who agitate and encourage, who flip behaviour and usher in transforming power because they behave the way Jesus would behave. Amen? A kingdom catalyst.

They bless when others are cursing. They bless because they are filled with the Spirit and they are doing what Jesus would do. They rejoice appropriately in community and they mourn too.

And they do it led by the Spirit. Catalysts, he says, harmonise. They harmonise.

We have an amazing musical team. And I asked some of them to help me out just in this point. Ben's going to come out and show us what music sounds like when one person sings a beautiful couple of lines of a song.

And you know, God has gifted us in community to do things by ourselves really well, and we can glorify God and it sounds like this.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

Just beautiful, perfect. Maybe not perfect. What it needs, what it needs is a bit of catalytic harmony.

Don't you reckon? I mean, someone comes into that community, into that work of good, and brings their giftedness, and they work together. It's something really special.

I once was lost, but now I'm found.

Was blind, but now I see.

But why stop with one catalyst? You can add two more catalysts to this, and it starts to have a sense of kingdom harmony and catalytic power by the power of Jesus. That was good.

Thank you. That worked way better than I thought it was going to work. That was awesome.

What a great picture of a catalytic community. By the grace of God, by the power of the Spirit, we are called to live differently, live love, and catalysed community.

And finally, Paul says, basically cross, carry. Cross, carry. Don't repay anyone for evil, evil for evil.

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it's possible, as far as it depends on you, isn't this the challenging line? Live at peace with everyone.

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it's written in his mind to avenge. I will repay, says the Lord, on the contrary. If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he's thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will keep burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Paul is asking this church, it's quite a small church, maybe 60 people at Rome to carry their cross, to live a cross-shaped life, to not repay evil for evil, because that's what Jesus did. Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing as he gave his life. To live at peace. We can only do that by the grace and power of God, to live in the power of the cross, to give up on revenge and to submit to Christ in the way of the cross.

To feed your enemy is to radically redefine the culture of this world. And finally, that powerful line that he finishes chapter 12 with, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Evil is ultimately defeated by the God, man, Jesus Christ, dying on a cross and rising again. Hallelujah. So Christ in Romans, Christ in Romans, where isn't Christ in Romans?

Everything's different. So we are all in. It's time to think new and remember to humble by self and by grace to step up.

And most importantly, as you do step up, live love when you can be salt and light, catalyse community for the glory of Jesus and following Jesus cross carry. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are glorified through every page of Romans.

And in Chapter 12, we are taken on a journey, looking back and considering the wonder of the story of the Gospel, which is your story, the righteousness of God revealed in you. And we are challenged by the life we are called to live in Christ.

I pray that you would enable us, by your Spirit, to be a people who live that out. And we want to say thank you, Lord Jesus, for the invitation you have now to us, to join you at the Table of Remembrance.

We know that we are called to carry a cross, but it's only because you did, once and for all, bear the wrath of God in that one moment in time and space, where you were clothed in the sin of the world, and the divine exchange happened, you took what we deserved, that by faith, through your resurrection, we could receive what you deserved. A full, restored relationship with the God the Father.