

ROMANS SERIES TEN
IT DOESN'T GET ANY SIMPLER
Dr. Roger Barrier
Romans 4:9-25; John 3:14-16 ; Num. 21:4-9

Recognize high school and college graduates.

- **SLIDE:** (HS picture) When you were in school-were you Cowboys; Red necks; macho jocks; cheer leaders; egghead brainy types, freaky nonconformist; geeky computer nerds?

Let's take a survey—not by the group you were in, but by the group you wanted to be in.

We know which group is at the top of the heap in many high schools: the jocks and cheerleaders. Return at 10 year reunion and the geeks and eggheads have all the money.

- **SLIDE:** In High school, it is all about acceptance.
- **SLIDE:** No one wants to be a loser, left out, excluded.

● **SLIDE:** It is built into our nature to want to be loved and included.
Cell phones and the internet have overtaken our lives. Why? It is all about acceptance and connection. We don't have to stand in line to get to talk to someone. We can stay on line, or on the phone with a friend.

In many ways we never grow up. It is not just High school, Life is a longing to be accepted—fear of being rejected.

Romans 4 is all about belonging. It is all about acceptance. It is all about moving into the family of God.

- **SLIDE:** Considering deeper dimensions of life, we long for those same needs to be met in an intimate relationship with the eternal, open and vulnerable God of our universe.
- **SLIDE:** Things like: amplify these and make them attractive

Acceptance—“Accepted in the Beloved”
Approval—“There is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus”
Attention—“Behold I am with you always”
Comfort—“The God of all comfort who comforts us”
Encouragement—“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”
Security—“I will never leave you nor forsake you”
Support—“I will hold you in my right hand”

- **SLIDE:** Community of relationships in Christ
- **SLIDE:** AN OVERVIEW OF ROMANS

Romans 1-3—No excuse: atheists; agnostics, good people, religious people. All sin and fall short. We saw that salvation is not by religious rites or works – Not by circumcision or baptism or partaking of the Lord's Supper or by law or works.
It is justification by faith alone! Only way to win the game with God is simple Faith.

Want to go on to Sanctified, victorious Christian life in Romans 5, 6, 7, 8 – but it's almost as if Paul says, Whoa, whoa. Hold on. Want to be certain that you understand justification by faith.

Romans 4 is the last time Paul will emphasize that nothing but faith saves!

Romans 4 reads like a legal document. Lets make it simple.

READ and EXPLAIN ROMANS 4: focus on FAITH verses.

I am going to sum up Romans 4 in a simple formula.

●**SLIDE: A SIMPLE FORMULA FOR A DIVINE TRANSACTION**

OVERHEAD: $F + 0 = R$

Where F = Faith in Christ

0 = nothing

R = righteousness

As I speak this morning some of you will feel a strange stirring inside—that is Jesus Christ Himself stirring your inner soul to come into a loving relationship with Him.

Give you an opportunity to respond to His prompting latter this morning.

Now let's explore this truth about finding acceptance and belonging with Jesus Christ.

●**SLIDE: WHERE "FAITH" EQUALS FAITH IN CHRIST**

READ ROMANS 4:17b: *"The God who gives life to the dead"

Refers to the time when God promised to produce many descendants and even a world-wide Savior through the loins of Isaac. Then before Isaac could even have any children, God told Abraham to sacrifice him on an altar.

●**SLIDE: READ ROMANS 4:23-24.**

The Lord said something special in resurrection. His resurrection is the proof of our justification!

READ ROMANS 4:25.

On the cross Jesus Christ paid the debt for our sin in full! His resurrection is our receipt.

●**SLIDE: ●**The amount of our faith has very little to do with it in the initial stages. Jesus told us that even if we have a tiny faith—like a grain of mustard seed—we have enough.

You can surrender your life to Christ with very little faith. You can do it today.

●**SLIDE: ●**Christians will experience doubts occasionally. Trust Christ and immediately Satan begins to attack and to assail.

Even John the Baptist doubted Jesus: "Are you the one or shall we look for another?"

Jesus (didn't scold him for doubting) said, "The lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear," etc.

Every Christian doubts at times – but as he grows in maturity, doubts become fewer and less frequent.

Doubts don't cancel out faith. Faith enables a man to overcome his doubts and to answer them.

●**SLIDE: ●**Faith is a cold-blooded choice to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Rational choice. Julie doesn't need this—the emotional closeness with Christ is all she needs.

●**SLIDE:** WHERE “0” EQUALS “0”

What Might People Add To The Formula?

●**SLIDE:** Circumcision is a sign and a seal. Sign of a covenant between God and Israel. If you were circumcised, you were automatically right and accepted by God.

Man comes onto the office of Ray Stedman – Bible in hand. “I’ve been reading the Bible,” he didn’t know a lot about it, but he asked, “Will you circumcise me?” Stedman gasped, “Why?”

“Well, I’ve been reading in the Bible about all these folks who were circumcised and it seems that if you want to know God you have to be circumcised.

Faith comes not by religious rites.

Circumcision doesn't save. Abraham was justified by believing the promise about Jesus fifteen years before he was ever circumcised.

Talking to TOM AUSTIN – nine year old – “If you were in the desert with your brother and only a little water left. You’re just about to die. What would you do?” “Drink the water.” “No, just a little, no hope of living.” “I don’t know.” “Baptize your brother and yourself – otherwise you’ll go to Hell.”

Circumcision was like a wedding ring. It is an outside symbol of an inside change.

The modern equivalent of circumcision is baptism. Baptism doesn't save. It is a symbol of our salvation! Baptism is an outward symbol of something that's happened on the inside.

If you are still regarding baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or mass, or christening, or confirmation, as having anything to do with God declaring you righteous and making you fit for Heaven, then you are totally insecure in your relationship with God.

Need a personal relationship with Christ based on a personal encounter of surrender by faith.

The Law: all sorts of special behaviors and requirements

Suppose I say to you, “If you get off your pew and start flying around the sanctuary, I’ll give you \$5,000.” You’d have to say, “Forget it. No one can do that in their natural strength. You are asking me to do that which I can’t do.”

The promise of the law is: Do all of this and live! But the promise that comes with the law is useless. No one can live up to it!

●**SLIDE:** WHERE “R” EQUALS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

(“credited to him as righteousness”; “The just shall live by faith.” “I will give him a white robe and tattoo my name in his forehead.”)

Righteousness is a justified standing with God.

Righteousness is a gift which enables us to interact intimately with the Living God.

●**SLIDE**: DON'T MESS WITH THE FORMULA.

READ GALATIANS 1:6-12: 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel- 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

OVERHEAD: different gospel = hetero
which is really no gospel at all = allo

Butter Pecan Ice cream cone: get me heteros: Julie brings me another butter pecan cone.
Get me heteros: she brings me carrots—not ice cream at all. I spit out carrots when I wanted butter pecan.
Greek word “allos” would be more appropriate. She brought me “allos.”

You are not believing the same gospel at all. You have turned to a monstrosity.

“Eternally cursed” = “anathema”

READ GALATIANS 1:10: Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

READ GALATIANS 1:11-12: I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Mormons

F + 14 things = third heaven

●**SLIDE**: THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS REALLY SIMPLE.

God simplifies; man complicates.

Complex religions with all the things we have to do to find God, perform before God, check off lists

●**SLIDE**: One inch formula in a complex universe
 $E=mc^2$

Einstein: “God made the universe simple. If you cannot explain it in simple terms then you are not speaking the language of the universe.

Einstein worked on a unified theory of everything.

OVERHEAD: WNF, SNF, EM, G: Strings included gravity

String theory: twang it and get proton, electron, quarks, mesons, pi mesons—sparticles.

11 dimensions: universe unstable in 10, collapsed and expanded with our four—6 distorted space time and rolled up.

Math to describe it now down to a one inch formula.

F + 0 = R is simple.

- The minute our religion gets complex, or hard to figure out, we are moving further and further away from God.

- Use the formula with your friends.

- SLIDE: THE SIMPLE PICTURE OF THE MESSAGE**

How many know John 3:16?

How many know John 3:14-15? – READ JOHN 3:14-15

In John 3:14-15 Jesus referred to the uplifted Bronze Serpent as the perfect picture illustration of salvation by faith.

Go to Numbers 21.

In Numbers 21:4-9 we see that faith in the uplifted Christ is the only remedy that God has provided for dealing with human sin!

READ NUMBERS 21:4-5

Dangerous thing to mumble and murmur against the Lord. He hears our murmurings and doesn't appreciate it at all. (That's another sermon.)

READ NUMBERS 21:6

God sends fiery serpents to punish them. Imagine, sleeping in bed and waking up to find poisonous snakes covering the floor of your tent!

Getting up, step outside – snakes as far as the eye can see. Can't move without stepping on one.

If bitten by snake – death. They're doomed to die.

Jesus referred to this as a picture of sin

Old Testament picture of what sin does to us. Sin is coursing through our spiritual veins racing directly toward our spiritual heart.

The wages of sin is death.

READ NUMBERS 21:7

Repentance abounds – we've sinned.

God knows that only a surrender heart can enter properly into fellowship with Him.

READ NUMBERS 21:8.

“Just look at the uplifted serpent and you'll be healed.

Seemed like strange request – but Moses obeyed.

What good will that do? God is teaching faith and belief in the Word of God.

Bitten, life ebbing away, look, new life.

READ NUMBERS 21:9.

Many dying that day.

Imagine man at back. Can't understand – how is looking going to save? Isn't that just like a preacher. Here I need his help and he asks me to do what I can't understand.”

Can't see how just looking is going to save me. But, it is so simple. Anyone can do it. Looks and lives.

Another man – I wish Moses had come sooner. Too far gone to be saved. If he'd just come sooner I now I'd be saved, but there's no way now. But, it is so simple. Anyone can do it. Looks and lives.

Third man, also dying. Poison gets closer and closer to his heart. "Can't understand this, but I know that Moses is a man sent from God. If Moses says all I have to do is look, well, I can't understand it, but I'm going to look." As he drops to the ground, he looks up and is saved.

READ John 3:14-15.

Just as people got new life from looking at Moses' serpent in the wilderness, you can gain new life from believing on the cross where I'm soon to die.

We all are bitten by poisonous snake – sin is in his spiritual bloodstream.

"I'm soon to be lifted up on the cross to die, just like Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness – if you'll look to the cross and believe, you can find new life – you can be born again."

May not understand.

May think you've sinned too much.

Just look to the cross and believe – saved.

VIDEO: the hands

●**SLIDE: TODAY IS THE DAY TO BEGIN THE LIFE OF FAITH IN CHRIST.**