

**ROMANS**  
**Lesson 156–January 4, 2015**

**Welcome To**  
**BARAH MINISTRIES**  
*a Christian Church*  
**Rory Clark**  
**Pastor-Teacher**

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark.

It's pretty easy to focus on all the things that are going wrong in your life. When we stop to think about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our souls must instead be flooded with gratitude...that He has helped us to weather every single storm we have ever had in this life, including the storms that are going on in our lives right now. It's a great idea to take "minute vacations" every day and to remind ourselves of His very real and very active presence in our lives...in Colossians, Chapter 2, Verses 6 and 7, the apostle Paul exhorts us...

COL 2:6-7

*Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord (with a decisive faith), so walk in Him (living a decisive lifestyle), having been firmly rooted (by Him into union with Christ) and now being built up in Him (as He keeps on perfecting you) and (having been) established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.*

Because of our relationship "in Christ" we are to be decisive, and we are not to be blown about by every wind...we are to grow up in all aspects to Him. In First Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 1, however, we learn...

1TI 4:1

*...God the Holy Spirit explicitly says that in later times (in every generation) some (believers in Christ) will fall away from the faith, paying attention (instead) to deceitful spirits and (paying attention to the) doctrines of demons...*

All of us get sucked into the trap of listening to the world and its "wisdom" and therefore we doubt that God is on our side...we doubt that we have the

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victory in advance of the effort...we forget that God is for us and not against us...we forget that because we have God's peace, that He has nothing against us, His believers. False teachers and their false teachings encourage us to forget that the Lord loves us unconditionally...and that we reside in the sphere of His protection and grace...First Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 4...

1TI 4:4

*For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude...*

We have freedom in God's plan to accept or reject the Lord's teachings... perhaps we should let this be the year when we reject doubt, and fear, and hatred of others, and loathing of ourselves...Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verse 28...

HEB 12:28

*Therefore, since we believers "in Christ" receive a kingdom from God which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude (to God for all He has given us), by which we may offer to God an acceptable (life of) service with reverence and awe (toward Him)...*

Welcome to the place where you can relax...where you can take in the divine viewpoint that helps you to give thanks for everything God brings into your life.

**MUSIC AND REFLECTION**

*Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ*  
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

*Word of God Speak*

Let's begin our worship of the Lord with an opening song. Here's June Murphy to sing...WORD OF GOD SPEAK.

**OPENING PRAYER**

*Let us pray...*

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We're grateful to you, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you for a new year...thank you for the days, and weeks and months you have allotted to us to live on this earth...we have a lot to be grateful for... thank you for making me a Pastor, and thank you for all the people who have come through this congregation over the seven years we have been in existence who have shaped my character and who have established this church, either through tribulation or contribution...

We ask you for a fresh start and for a fresh perspective today...we ask that the words of this lesson might be Yours, and not ours, and we ask that the things we learn today, the things that You are placing in our souls, might give us Your divine viewpoint, and help us reject human viewpoint, so that we can approach every situation in our lives from Your perspective...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name... Amen.

**TODAY'S STUDY**

**What are You Grateful For?**

To the resident congregation of Barah Ministries...thank you for being here today face-to-face...and to our non-resident congregation, thank you for joining us at your convenience on the internet...even though I am absent from those of you who are not resident in my physical body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, I am grateful for you, and I am rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability and constancy of your faith in Christ as you continue to take in His Word.

I love to start off the year, I love to start off every day, and I love to start off a lesson with the pressure of a question...we begin this year with this question...

**QUESTION FOR REFLECTION**

What are you grateful for?

When I ask questions of you, it is great if you say to yourself, "That's a great

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question!” That means the question forced introspection. It is better if you fetch a pen and a piece of paper and write your answers to the question as you listen. What ARE you grateful for?

Last year we completed our study of the first five chapters of Paul’s letter to the Romans. I am grateful for that. Paul’s letter to the Romans is the foundation for the Christian Way of Living! The New Testament opens with the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, each of them teaching us some aspect of the life of Jesus Christ during His thirty-three years on the earth. Then, the Book of Acts...the book which details the formation of the first century Christian Church. Then in the sixth book of the New Testament, the mantle is handed to Paul, and he begins his teaching with the letter to the Romans, a letter that lays the foundation for the Christian Way of Life.

I can readily admit that after five decades of being a Christian, last year’s study of Romans opened my eyes to many things I did not know, about the Lord Jesus Christ, about life, and about Christianity. As a result, I open this year more relaxed than I have ever been and more comfortable with the security of the life I have “in Christ.” I sincerely hope that infection of relaxation has spread to you, and that you are relaxed because you are “in union with Christ.” I want you to know the power of this “so great salvation” you have chosen and to have the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension washing over, and soothing your soul.

I began my week reading each of the first five chapters of the book of Romans, and I wanted to read them to you today, word for word, but there just isn’t time. What God the Holy Spirit encouraged me to do instead, is to extract from the first five chapters all of the things I am grateful for. I do so happily and wholeheartedly.

As I reflect on Romans, Chapter 1, I am grateful that I am not as bad as Paul! I am like Paul, but I am not as bad as he is...First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 9 says...

1CO 15:9

*For I (Paul) am the least of the apostles, and (I am) not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

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Ephesians, Chapter 3, Verse 8...

EPH 3:8

*To me (Paul), the very least of all saints (believers in Christ), this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...*

When I look at my life, with all my mistakes with all the skeletons in my closet, I relax knowing that there is a man who is admittedly worse than me who has done great things for God...in fact, the worst man who has ever lived is the man whom God chose to write the instruction set to the Church Age believers...the most important task of this era. As a result of God's choice of Paul, I know God has great things in store for me, a person not quite as bad as Paul, and I look forward with gratitude to the things God has planned for the very least of all the Pastors, me.

I am grateful that I have found the accurate gospel message, and that I chose the narrow way that leads to life...Christ! Matthew, Chapter 7, Verses 13 and 14...

MAT 7:13-14

*“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the narrow gate...and once you believe in Him, you have the resurrection life.

I am grateful that God came to find me. Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 11 says...

ROM 3:11

*There is no creature who understands God...there is no creature who seeks for a relationship with God...*

Instead God found me. Luke, Chapter 15, Verse 4 says...

LUKE 15:4

*“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them,*

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*does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?”*

God finds us...and He loses none of us except those who want to be lost...

**JOH 17:12**

*While I (the Lord Jesus Christ) was with them (the apostles), I was keeping them in Your name (God the Father) which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition (Judas Iscariot), so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.*

Not one perished except the one who wanted to...we have free will...and we can reject a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, just as Judas did.

I am grateful that God makes Himself visible to us, both from within and without. Romans, Chapter 1, Verse 20...

**ROM 1:20**

*For since the creation of the world the Lord's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen by all creatures, being understood even through what has been made, so that all mankind are without excuse (before the justice of God).*

I am grateful that I worship and serve the Creator, not the creature, Satan, the enemy of God. I am grateful that because I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I am righteous, and therefore not subject to God's wrath. Romans, Chapter 1, Verses 17 and 18...

**ROM 1:17-18**

*...as it is written, "...the righteous man shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness...*

I am grateful that I am righteous, not unrighteous...that I am godly, not ungodly...I am grateful that I am a saint, not a sinner...not because of anything I have done, but because of all the things the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me. Titus, Chapter 3, Verse 5...

**TIT 3:5**

*The Lord Jesus Christ saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have*

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*done in (self)-righteousness, but (He saved us) according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and by renewing by God the Holy Spirit...*

Take a five-minute break.

**BREAK**

*Draw Me Close*

*Somewhere Over the Rainbow*

Welcome back! What are you grateful for?

**QUESTION FOR REFLECTION**

What are you grateful for?

As I reviewed the first five chapters of the book of Romans, the subject of our study last year, I am grateful to know that I was born in sin, and as a result I am guilty of violating every facet of God’s law...which made me a criminal in His eyes, and subject to His wrath. Then those sweet words from Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 21...

**ROM 3:21**

*But now, apart from the Law, the righteousness from God has been manifested (made clearly visible)...*

I am grateful that God made a provision for me, and for all who would believe in Christ, that my belief in the Person and the Work of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf has been treated the same as He treated the believing of Abraham...Romans, Chapter 4, Verse 3...

**ROM 4:3**

*For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it was credited to him as (absolute) righteousness (the admission ticket to heaven).”*

I am grateful that a God who never changes accomplished my salvation, and He will never change His mind about the fact that I am saved. John, Chapter 10, Verse 28...

**JOH 10:28**

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*...and I (the Lord Jesus Christ) give eternal life to believers in Christ, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.*

I am grateful that there is nothing I can do to work for my own salvation, and that there is nothing I have to do to preserve it. Romans, Chapter 4, Verse 5...

ROM 4:5

*But to the one who does not work (for salvation), but (instead) believes in the Lord Jesus Christ who justifies the ungodly (unrighteous sinner), this person's faith (not his works) is credited as righteousness...*

I am grateful the God did the impossible in saving a wretch like me. Romans, Chapter 4, Verse 21...

ROM 4:21

*...and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.*

The promises of God are a guarantee.

I am grateful that the Lord Jesus Christ made it clear to me how He feels about me when I am at my worst...Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 8...

ROM 5:8

*But God the Father demonstrates His own unconditional love toward us, in that while we were yet (ungodly, unrighteous) sinners, Christ died for us.*

God did not wait for us to clean up our acts to save us...He died for us when we were ungodly unrighteous sinners.

I am grateful that I am “in Christ” and no longer “in Adam.” As a result, I have peace with God. Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 1...

ROM 5:1

*Therefore (since everything in the first four chapter is true), (and) having been justified by (God through our) faith (in the Lord Jesus Christ), we (now) have peace with God (the Father) through our (union with the) Lord Jesus Christ...*



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I am grateful for all of you who consider Barah Ministries to be your spiritual home...and here's my Happy New Year's wish for all of you...I exhort you to live your life in the eye of the hurricane.

The most recognizable feature in a hurricane is the eye. The eye of a hurricane is found at the center. The eye is the focus of a hurricane...it's the point about which the rest of the storm rotates and it has the lowest surface pressures that are found in the storm. The skies are often completely clear above the eye of a hurricane, and the winds are relatively light. It is actually the calmest part of any hurricane.

The eye is so calm because the strong surface winds that converge towards the center of the hurricane never reach it. The rotation of the winds produces a coriolis effect that deflects the harsh winds in the band of the hurricane away from the center, causing the wind to rotate around the center of the hurricane's "eye wall," leaving the exact center of the hurricane completely calm.

I'm absolutely certain that God did not give us hurricanes to teach us about the Christian Way of Living. God could not be smart enough to communicate to us through a hurricane that the world, and its ferocious winds can swirl viciously all around us every day, intending us harm, yet our union with Christ keeps us in the eye of the hurricane if we want it to, a place of absolute calm. When we realize this at a point in our lives, that God HAS INDEED provided such a life of calm for us, a peace which surpasses understanding, we can say the same thing Paul says in Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 11...

PHI 4:11

*...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.*

Have you learned to be content regardless of circumstances? What are you grateful for?

**QUESTION FOR REFLECTION**

What are you grateful for?

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If you live your life at the eye of the hurricane, you can be content with the psychotic neighbor who is out to drive you crazy...you can forgive the cheating spouse, realizing the spouse is not “cheating on you,” but instead is cheating self...you can stop giving the finger to other drivers by learning to share the road with people who are frustrated NASCAR failures...you can embrace the homeless beggar with your contribution...you can treat people who engage in homosexuality as if they are human beings...you can support your friends who are going through a divorce even if you are not a fan of the end of a marriage...you can stop worrying and start living...you can stop doubting and give your trust as a gift...you can stop vacillating and make a frickin’ decision...you can sit on the bench in a sport and learn the lesson of being on the bench...you can excel at a job you hate...you can be the star in your own movie and think things are going to go well for you...you can support a boss whom you think is bad person...you can enjoy having a new baby in the house even though everything about your life has been disrupted by the little creatan...you can enjoy Satan’s attack on the unity in your marriage...you can say something when you’d rather say nothing...you can appreciate the brother whom you have supported all your life when he betrays you in a moment of your weakness...you can avoid putting substances in your body that are not supportive of your health, like alcohol and drugs and nicotine...you can spend your money on others and not be bothered at all when they are ungrateful...you can smile at your child’s rebellion knowing that all great things start with a dissatisfaction with the status quo...you can be even more happy as you see their dreams of changing the world dashed when they realize they are human just like you...you can feel compassion for those who think their racist thoughts makes them superior to you...you can say no when you are tempted to engage in things like pornography, by selecting a pastime that is healthier for your psyche...you can be happy that you get to care for your relatives as they age, even when you think they aren’t all there...you can eat well and feel better as a result...you can exercise a little every day and feel the joy of extra endorphins coursing through your body...you can open your heart and let others in...you can stop feeling helpless and hopeless and worthless...you can begin to realize that effort, hard work, always pays off...you can realize that avoiding work is harder than doing the work...you can put down the electronic devices and remember the joy of a human conversation...you can operate with a schedule instead of winging it.

You are in my prayers for the Happy New Year of your life. This year,

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avoid like the plague the sin of ingratitude. Thank God for the tribulation. Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 3 to 5...

**ROM 5:3-5**

*...we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance brings about, proven character; and proven character brings about hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the unconditional love of God has been poured out within our hearts through God the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Happy New Year...be thankful...for all that you've got...especially a relationship with our great God.

**The Promises of the Lord Jesus Christ**

When God makes a promise...  
it's a guarantee!

**2PE 2:20-21**

*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own private interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men carried along by God the Holy Spirit spoke directly from the exact thinking of THE God, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**2TI 3:16-17**

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

**2TI 2:15**

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

**CLOSING SONG**

*How Great You Are*

**CLOSING PRAYER**

*Let us pray...*

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**THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION**

And we pray that You continue to shape the messages from this pulpit that are an accurate reflection of Your unconditional love, Your glorious Person, Your lucid thinking, Your impeccable work, and Your magnificent essence...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen.

**Thanks for coming...for watching...for listening!**

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