Lent Soup and Supper 2023 – Week 3 of The New Testament you never knew

**The Ministry of the Apostle Paul**

“Everything for Paul changed when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Suddenly, he realized that even though it had seemed impossible before, a crucified man who had claimed to be the Messiah had been vindicated by Israel’s God, the creator God. And with that realization came a new call, a new vocation, to take that message to the ends of the earth.” (N.T. Wright)

**Last Week’s reflection question:**

What insights did you gain about the people you encountered in the readings?

**Video Notes:**

The Uniqueness of Paul

Paul’s View of the God and people of Israel

Paul’s view of Jesus as Lord and the doctrine of Justification

**Group Discussion**

1. Why do you think Paul was such a controversial figure by both Jewish religious leaders and Roman authorities? If Jesus were to return today, would he be equally controversial?
2. Although Paul calls believers to honor governing authorities, it is clear he understood government and civic servants are under the power, rule, and hand of God. How do you see this emphasized in the following passage from Romans? What does this teach about our devotion to God above all human powers and authorities? Every person must be subject to the ruling authorities.

There is no authority, you see, except from God, and those that exist have been put in place by God. As a result, anyone who rebels against authority is resisting what God has set up, and those who resist will being judgement on themselves. For rulers hold no terrors for people who do good, but only for those who do evil.If you want to have no fear of the ruling power do what is good, and it will praise you. It is God’s servant, you see, for you and your good. But if you do evil, be afraid; the sword it carries is no empty gesture. It is God’s servant, you see; an agent of justice to bring his anger on evildoers.

That is why it is necessary to submit, not only to avoid punishment, but because of conscience. That too, is why you pay taxes. The officials in question are God’s ministers, attending to this very thing. So, pay each of them what is owed: tribute to those who collect it, revenue to those who collect it. Respect those who should be respected. Honor the people one ought to honor. (Romans 13:1-7)

1. An important part of Paul’s teaching on justification is that Jesus transforms us and justifies us through his sacrifice. After reading the following, what are some specific ways we can adopt this kind of attitude and change our actions to line up with this teaching?

Does that sound as though my account was well in credit? Well, maybe; but whatever I had written in on the profit side, I calculated it instead as a loss – because of the Messiah. Yes, I know that’s weird, but there’s more: I calculate everything as a loss, because knowing King Jesus as my Lord is worth far more than everything else put together! In fact, because of the Messiah, I’ve suffered the loss of everything, and I now calculate it as trash, so that my profit may be the Messiah, and that I may be discovered in him, not having my own covenant status defined by Torah, but the status which comes through the Messiah’s faithfulness: the covenant status from God which is given to faith. This means knowing him, knowing the power of his resurrection, and knowing the partnership of his sufferings. It means sharing the form and pattern of his death, so that somehow I may arrive at the final resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:7-11)

**During the coming week**

You are invited to spend some time with Scripture. If you are able, read the following and note any insights you gain about justification and how sinful people are made righteous in God’s sight

Day 1: Romans 4-6

Day 2: Romans 9-11

Day 3: Galatians 2-3

Day 4: Ephesians 1

Day 5: Philippians 3