

35:36

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

gospel, Paul, church, Rome, Romans, Christ, God, verse, preach, edify, believers, faith, called, book, people, hear, writes, notice, apostleship, letter

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	- 1 -
1. Paul's Preface.....	- 3 -
The Purpose.....	- 6 -
2. Paul's Prayer.....	- 7 -
3. Paul's Proposition.....	- 9 -

Introduction

Well, tonight we come to the book of Romans.

- Martin Luther called this book "The chief of the New Testament."
- The early church father, Augustine, in his confessions tells us how he was saved when he was reading Romans 13:13. He literally opened his Bible to that and read that verse, and that was when God convicted him, and he was saved.
- John Wesley speaks of how his life was transformed after listening to Luther's commentary on the book of Romans in London.
- I can remember even in my own life, discovering the Doctrines of Grace. And then I opened up the book of Romans and read through the book of Romans. And it was then that my life and my theology was radically changed by this book.

And I'm sure we could tell of many, many more stories of believers whose lives have been changed by this book. I can promise you that if you stay with us through this study, in the book of Romans, you will see your life changed by this amazing book. It's a powerful book. It's an amazing book. This book has played a vital role in the life of the church worldwide, and I believe it will change our church as well. This book, the book of Romans will change our church, as we study its doctrine that is found in chapters 1 through 11, and then live out its application for our lives found in chapters 12 through 16. And so, if you wanted to break down the book of Romans, that's how you would break it down. Chapters 1 through 11, are all about doctrine. And then chapters 12 through 16, are about our duty as believers.

Now as you went through your worksheets in preparation for tonight, you hopefully noticed even from the 1st chapter of Romans that this letter is different from Paul's other letters that we've studied so far. For example, while Paul wrote this letter to the church that is at Rome, Paul was not the founder of the church at Rome. Paul did not find this church; he did not start this church in Rome.

We've studied so far 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, which was written to Timothy pastoring the church at Ephesus. We've also studied the book of Galatians. And all of those letters were written to churches, or to Timothy in a church, that were founded under the leadership of Paul. But Romans is different. The church at Rome was not founded under the leadership of Paul.

So how was it founded? Well, Acts chapter 2 gives us a clue. Acts chapter 2 in verse 5 says this.

"Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language." (This is the day of Pentecost.) "And they were amazed and astonished, saying "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and" (you get to verse 10,) "visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes..." (Acts 2:5-10)

Visitors from Rome were there on the day of Pentecost. And so on the day of Pentecost, the gospel is preached, the gospel is proclaimed. And you have these visitors who are there from Rome, and those visitors hear the gospel, they get saved, and they make their way back to Rome. And that is where they then start a church. The church in Rome is established.

Rome is a large city, was a large city as the capital of the Roman Empire, there are over a million people in the city of Rome. Think about the gospel opportunities that the Romans had in a large city like that. Lots of gospel opportunities to go and make disciples in Rome. That's what they did. They evangelize Rome, they share the gospel. And the church was born. And the church began to flourish there in Rome.

Now Paul knew about the church of Rome, although he didn't start the church he knew about the church. And no doubt with all the people that he encountered and had traveled throughout the empire, they knew about the church that was there at Rome, and therefore they told him all about the church that was there at Rome. And Paul's goal then was to go and visit the church, he wanted to go and see what was going on in Rome, and what was going on with these believers in the church.

But in God's providence, Paul was prevented from going there to see the believers. And you and I (listen to this), we should rejoice at the providence of God, right? That God did not allow him to go there and see the believers in Rome. Thank you, Lord, for not sending Paul there. Because if he would have gone there and been able to see those in Rome, we most likely wouldn't be reading this letter here

tonight. But in God's providence, God stopped Paul from going to Rome. And therefore, we now are reading this letter that he sent to the Romans. And we are the beneficiaries of it.

So, Paul wrote them this letter, having never met them before. And this letter is, as Luther said, the Chief of the New Testament. Now as we begin to work our way through this book, you'll notice that there's something different about how Paul writes this letter. In all of his letters, Paul writes to the churches to correct some kind of doctrine or address some kind of issue that was going on in the church that he was writing to. We clearly saw this in the book of Galatians, right? When we went through that...a lot of stuff going on in Galatians, that Paul needs to correct, right? In that region of Galatia. But Paul writes this letter to the Romans to give rich doctrinal truth and practical application.

It wasn't that the church at Rome was believing false doctrine. But it's always good for a church to know more about God, right? And Paul knows that -- he understands that -- and so he writes this letter to them to give them rich, doctrinal truth. So, he writes this letter, he writes this letter to the Romans to let them know that he wants to see them face to face. And he wants to see them face to face for several reasons

1. First, to edify the believers. He wants to go and visit them so that they can be edified. Second, he wants to go to Rome because he wants to preach the gospel. Paul was a preacher of the gospel, and he wanted to get there so that he could go and preach. Third, he wanted to go see the Romans face to face to connect with the Romans, so that he could receive edification from them.
2. Not only to go and edify them, but for them to edify him as well. For him to receive encouragement from them, before his planned trip to Spain, he wanted to go and visit them in Rome, and then he was going to go off to Spain, and he needed some encouragement. So, he wanted to go to Rome and see them. So that's a little background and introduction to the book of Romans.

Now let's dive into our text here. Open your Bibles to Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1. We're going to be looking tonight at verses 1 through 17. And we're going to break this portion of Scripture down into three sections, three different sections.

1. First, we'll call Paul's Preface, in verses 1 through seven.
2. Second, we'll see Paul's Prayer, in verses 8 through 15.
3. And then third, we're going to see Paul's Proposition in verses 16 and 17.

1. Paul's Preface

So let's begin first with Paul's preface here. Here is Paul's introduction to his letter. In the Greek these first seven verses here are one long sentence. If you're reading in the NASB, or the ESV, you will notice that there is well, it's one long sentence. Why? Why does Paul write one long sentence that are seven verses long? Well, as we study these first seven verses, you're going to be able to see that Paul

is excited about the gospel. He's pumped, he's ready to go. He got his pen out, and he's ready to write, and he's excited about the gospel, and he just launches right into it. And he begins to give them different aspects of the gospel in his introduction to them.

Look what he says in verse 1. "**Paul,**" I could stop right there and preach a whole sermon on that, but we're not going to tonight. "**A bondservant of Christ Jesus called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,...**" (Romans 1:1)

Now notice, Paul is the only one that's writing this letter. Many of his other letters you would see Paul and Sosthenes (1 Cor), or Paul and the brethren who are with me; or Paul and Timothy; or Paul and Sylvanus (aka Silas), or Timothy. But here Paul only names himself as the author, as the one who is writing to this church at Rome. This is a very personal letter for Paul. It's a personal letter to this church that he has never met before.

Think about this, he's never met them but he's writing to this church. Paul also gives them some information about himself. And there are three different truths that he lays out about himself.

1. First, he tells them that he is a bondservant. Notice that they're that he is a bondservant. That word there in the Greek is the word doulos, which means slave. He's a slave, it's a strong word that shows utter devotion to Christ, utter devotion to Christ, he is unashamedly a slave of Christ. That is, he submits every area of his life to the authority of Christ. And he shows to the Romans, that he is one who belongs solely to Christ. He is a slave of Christ. Let me ask you, do you see yourself that way? Do you identify yourself as a slave of Christ? Are you unashamedly a slave of Christ? That's how we should see ourselves as believers, who've been saved by Him, we are slaves of Christ, and we should live our lives in light of that.
2. Second, he says he is called as an apostle, called as an apostle. And who was he called by? He was called by Christ. Remember on the road to Damascus, where Christ appeared to him. And he was then called by God, called by God, not by men. And Paul was not self-appointed. He was not a self-appointed apostle. He was called by God. And when God called him, how did he respond? In obedience, he responded in obedience to Christ, and to the call of Christ upon his life. And what was he called to be? He was called to be an apostle, simply a sent out one, that's what apostle means someone who is sent out. And he was sent out by God, and therefore he has a special responsibility as a representative of God to give God's message to the world. That was his duty. That was his job. That was his responsibility. And we're grateful that he was faithful to God, right? We're grateful for his faithfulness to God, because we're here studying this letter that he faithfully declared to the Romans.
3. Third, Paul says he was set apart for the gospel of God. Now, some might read this and think that he was set apart to preach the gospel of God, which is true, he was set apart to preach the gospel of God. But he was also set apart to live the gospel in his life. He was set apart to be one who lived the gospel, he was not only a preacher of the gospel, but he also lived it out. And when he lived it out, his preaching became that much more effective as he went and declared the message of the gospel to others. Which is why he says in 1 Corinthians 9:27,

that I disciplined my body, and I make it my slave so that after I've preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified as a preacher of the gospel.

And he lived out the gospel as well. And notice how Paul identifies the gospel. Notice how he identifies it, he says, it is not his gospel, but it's whose gospel? It's God's gospel. It's not something that Paul came up with. Paul didn't think all of this stuff up himself. This is God's gospel. It's God's good news that He has for us. And He used Paul then as a mouthpiece to go and proclaim the gospel.

Verse 2, after Paul identifies the gospel as the gospel of God, he says,
[which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. \(Rom 1:2\)](#)

What's he saying here? He's saying that the gospel is not something new. God's good news is not something that is a New Testament truth only. It doesn't only appear in the New Testament, the New Testament is just the realization, or the fulfillment of it. The prophets in the Old Testament, they were proclaimers of the gospel as well. The gospel is all throughout the Old Testament. That's why we don't separate the Old Testament from the New Testament. It's all together. It's all God's revelation. It's all a part of God's good news, God's gospel for us.

In the Old Testament, those prophets, they were pointing forward to the Messiah who had come to save the people from their sins. But us, now, we point back to the Messiah, who came to save people from their sins. But the message has been preached for all of time, I could stop here and just preach a whole message on this. But I'll leave that to another time. But I want you to think about Genesis 3:15. Genesis 3:15 is the gospel right there in Genesis chapter 3. It's there in Genesis, and it's throughout the entire Old Testament, the gospel, the good news, that God saves sinners.

What's the gospel all about? Look at verse 3,
[concerning His Son who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh. \(Rom 1:3\)](#)

The gospel is about God's Son. It's about Jesus Christ. And then Paul tells the Romans, about not only His humanity, the humanity of Christ, but also about His messiahship as the one who is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.

In 2 Samuel 7, God gives the Davidic Covenant to David. And he says that one will come and will sit on the throne of David, listen to this forever, forever. Well, all the Jews knew that the Messiah is going to be one who would come and sit on the throne of David, that he would be one who is from the line of David. And Paul says here, it's Jesus. He's the fulfillment of that. He's the one who fulfilled that promise. So that's the humanity of Christ, it's his human perspective.

But then he goes on in verse 4, and he talks about the deity of Christ. Look at His deity, His deity in verse 4,

[who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, \(Rom 1:4\)](#)

He was not only from the line of David, but He is the Son of God. And that fact was made known and evidence through His resurrection.

Now we have to understand what declared means here. What does it mean that He was declared the Son of God? It doesn't mean that Jesus was not the Son of God before He was resurrected. That's not what Paul's saying here. He has always been the Son of God; He has always been deity. He was there at creation, as all things were created through Him as the second person of the Trinity. He was with the Father, and the Spirit for all eternity as They ordained the divine plan of redemption. But in His incarnation, He's declared to be God's Son, you remember when this happened? At is what? Baptism. **This is my beloved Son**, listen to Him. The voice came from heaven. That's the Father speaking of the Son there, in His incarnation, at His baptism.

He says, This is My son, the Father says that. And then through the resurrection, He was declared to the world to be the Son of God, to literally be God in human form. For only God could do what Jesus did. Only God could be resurrected. Just as He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was also resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul tells us in verse 4 there, we see here, the Trinity involved in the resurrection of Christ.

- It was God who resurrected Christ - Acts 2:24 tells us.
- It was Christ, who resurrected Himself -- John 2:19, says, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again." Remember Jesus said that.
- And it was the Holy Spirit who resurrected Christ, which is exactly what Paul is telling us right here in verse 4, the Trinity at work in the resurrection of Christ, and it was the resurrection of Christ then, that declared Him to the world to be the Son of God.

Do you see how Paul just gets right into the gospel here? He's getting right into Christ, right into the gospel, talking about resurrection. Talking about what God has done -- the promise of the gospel for all of time. He gets right into the gospel here. And so far, in just four verses we have seen not only the promise of the gospel, but also the person of the gospel, that is Jesus Christ.

The Purpose

Now in verses 5 & 6, we're going to see the purpose of the gospel, the purpose, look at verse 5
through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; (Rom 1:5-6)

Paul says that through Christ, believing in Christ, we that means all believing Christians have received grace. Every one of us has received grace, unmerited favor, we have something that you and I did not earn. We have the free gift of salvation, that none of us in this room, and no person for all of time has ever earned. You cannot earn your salvation. It's all about grace.

And not only have we received grace, but we've also received -- notice what Paul says here -- apostleship, apostleship. That means you and I, as believers have received apostleship. Now we have

to clarify what this means. He's not saying that all of us hold the Office of Apostle like Paul and the twelve did. It's not what he's saying here. Remember, apostle means what? A sent out one, right, a sent out one, which means in a general sense, we all have been sent out by God to go and preach the gospel, every one of us in this room are responsible and obligated to God to go and preach the gospel. That's our duty. It's what God has called us to do.

And so we have received apostleship, as those who have been sent out by God to go and preach the gospel. And why do we do it? He says, to bring about the obedience of faith. What does this mean? That we are to preach repentance and faith in Christ, and those who are truly saved are not those who just name the name of Jesus, but those who live in obedience to Jesus. Do you see that? To bring about the obedience of faith. That's what a true believer is someone who obeys Christ. Not just names the name of Christ. It's not enough just to name the name of Jesus to get you into heaven. Remember what Jesus said, "Many will say to me" what? "Lord Lord." (see Matthew 7:21-23) And Jesus will say, "I never knew you." Just saying Lord doesn't equal salvation. The fruit of true salvation is that a person also lives for Christ. And Paul says, we are a slave of Christ.

Paul then acknowledges in verse 6, that that is what happened to the Roman believers. They are the called ones of Christ, who are living in obedience to Christ. And how is that accomplished in their lives? It was accomplished through the power of the gospel. They are what they are by the power of the gospel. And then Paul gives his greeting finally in verse 7, and as he comes to the end of this one long sentence right here, he finally gives his greeting in verse 7,

to all who are beloved of God in Rome, call the saints; Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 1:7)

Notice again, the believers are called by God. This is what we call the effectual call, the effectual call, the effectual call that happens when God redeems the heart of that person who hears the gospel. The effectual call, the general call goes out to everyone, Repent and believe in Christ. That's the general call. But the effectual call happens in the heart of that person who hears, when they truly repent and believe in Christ. That's what he's talking about here. This is the effectual call that happens.

And notice what he calls them here. He calls them what? Saints, he calls them saints, which means one who has set apart or separated ones. Now, this is not a term designated for someone who has done a lot of good works, or who is who has been canonized by the church, or someone in whom we should pray to. It's not what Paul is talking about here. All believers are saints, according to God, every one of us who are believers here tonight, are saints. Do you realize that? We're separated ones -- we've been set apart from this world, for God. And then Paul gives him this familiar introductory greeting

Grace to you, and peace. So that's Paul's preface.

2. Paul's Prayer

Let's look at our second point here. Paul's prayer verse 8

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. (Rom 1:8)

Paul starts off his prayer with thankfulness for the believers in Rome, because the whole world is hearing about their faith in Christ. What an amazing thing to hear about your church, right? Think about that. You get a letter from the apostle Paul. And he says, I've heard about your faith. Wow! If someone said, they're hearing about the faith of those here at Faith Bible Church around the world. Wow, we would be amazed. But it's because of what God is doing in the lives of the believers in Rome, that people hear about their faith. God was building His church, and the world was hearing about it.

Notice what he said about them. Notice what he says about them, not that they were a church that had a beautiful building, or that their music was really rockin, or that they had great shows and and the people performed really well at their church. No. What are they known for? Their faith in Christ, their faith in Christ. May that be said about us around the Twin Cities, right? We need to be a church that is known by our faith in Christ.

Paul goes on in verse 9, and he tells them how much he prays for them. Look at verse 9

For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the gospel* of His Son, is my witness *as to how unceasingly I make mention of you* (Rom 1:9)

Notice Paul also reminds them that God, whom he serves, is the God in whom he preaches. Do you see a key theme here? What's Paul talking about? Paul is all about the gospel, preaching the gospel. And he says that God is a witness of how much he prays for them. Brother and sister, do you pray for your church? Do you pray for us as leaders of this church? We need prayer. Do you pray for the Bible study leaders in this church? They need prayer. Do you pray for your brothers and sisters in this church, we all need prayer. And we should be praying for one another. Be a praying church who is praying for one another. And I believe the reason why the church at Rome had such a great faith is because they were a praying church. Listen to what Paul tells him in Romans 15:30.

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, (Rom 15:30)

He says, church at Rome, pray for me. Paul asked for prayer because he knew that they were a praying church. And he also prays for them. What was his prayer request? Verse 10

always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. (Rom 1:10)

He wants to meet them. He wants to see them. He's been hearing about their faith and he wants to get to Rome to go and visit them. Why? Verses 11 and 12

For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. (Rom 1:11-12)

He wants to see them so that he can edify them with his spiritual gifts. But he also wants to see them so that they can edify him with their spiritual gifts. He knows of their great faith and how he the apostle Paul can be edified by them. Look at the humility of Paul here. One of the greatest men to ever walk the planet is here saying, I want to see you so that I can be edified by you guys. What a humble man. He knows he's not perfect. He knows he can still grow and be strengthened.

But notice he also understands the purpose and the function of the church. You see that? He knows it doesn't happen (being edified and being sanctified) by being all alone. He wants to be with them. He needs them. He knows he needs to be strengthened by them, that there's strength and edification that happens when we gather together as a church.

He continues on in verse 13, and wants to know, wants them to know that he has wanted to get to them for a visit, but God has prevented him from going there. And he wants to go there to preach the gospel. He says in verse 14

I am under obligation... (Rom 1:14)

Who is Paul under obligation to? First to God, right? He's been called by God, then sent out by God, he's under obligation to God to go and preach the gospel.

But he's also obligated to the Gentiles and the barbarians. That is those who are Greeks and non-Greeks, because remember, he's an apostle to the Gentiles. We saw this in Galatians when we went through the book of Galatians. That would include the Romans, they were Greek speaking people, and they would have been considered the wise ones, the Greeks were the wise ones. But the foolish ones that he talks about there, are the uneducated ones who would be the non-Greeks, or what Paul calls the barbarians. They're the uneducated ones. That's why Paul wants to get to Rome to preach the gospel to all who are there to everyone. Both the Greeks and the barbarians.

Notice Paul doesn't care about social class of people. He wants to preach to all mankind. And that should be our attitude in sharing the gospel, too, right? To preach the gospel to everyone.

So that's Paul's preface and Paul's prayer, point number three,

3. Paul's Proposition

Last two verses here, verses 16 and 17. They give us the theme of this letter, and what is the theme, the gospel, it's the gospel. And then throughout the rest of this letter, he's going to expound on the gospel for us. Look at what he says in verse 16.

For I'm not ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16)

Paul was eager to get to Rome to preach to the Greeks and barbarians, because he was not ashamed of the gospel. And we know that for a fact, we know that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. How do we know? Think about all the beatings that Paul went through? Think about the imprisonments that Paul went through, the times that he's driven out of town for preaching the gospel, was he ashamed of the gospel? No, he wasn't. In fact he got beaten, thrown out of town. And he just went right back into town and started preaching the gospel again. Why? Because he's unashamed of the gospel.

Why was he not ashamed of it, because he knew the power of the gospel, and that God's gospel was power enough to save both the Greeks and the barbarians, the wise and the foolish, the educated and uneducated, and even includes the Jews in there too.

Basically, to sum it up -- all men, the gospel is power enough to save all men. All who believe the gospel, who believe in Christ will be saved. And Paul was not ashamed of that message.

Many people today, though, are ashamed of this message. They're afraid to give the gospel because it offends people. But a gospel that does not offend someone is no gospel at all. Did you hear that? A gospel that does not offend someone is no gospel at all. The gospel offends because it confronts sin, the sin of the sinner, and the reality that they are headed to hell.

Don't be afraid, don't be ashamed of this message. Because they must hear this message. They must hear that they are sinners in need of a Savior. And then once they recognize that, that they need a savior, we tell them all about the Savior and what He's done for them. That's our duty. That's our obligation.

I heard a pastor say recently, it's easy to convince someone that they're a sinner. I would disagree with him. Most people think they're good. Most people think they're good, and they're on their way to heaven, but they're not. And the reason why people are ashamed to preach the gospel is because they're afraid to convince the sinner that they are not good. Because they know that the sinner will fight back or possibly be hurt by the message. And then who do they take it out on? On us, the messenger, right?

We must be faithful and unashamedly preach the gospel just as Paul was, we do it lovingly. Right? We do it lovingly, but we do it unashamedly.

He goes on in verse 17.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith... (rom 1:17)

That's the key theme of Romans -- The righteousness of God, the righteousness of God. What is that? That is God's perfect standard. The gospel reveals that and the gospel reveals that God is holy and we are not, it reveals that God's standard is perfection, and every one of us falls short of it.

Date: Wednesday September 15, 2021 **Scripture:** Romans 1:1-17

But it also reveals that by faith alone in Christ alone, that we can have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. That's the good news. That's the good news.

And it's then that we receive the free gift of salvation, and we are declared righteous by God, and we live our lives by faith in Him who has saved us from our sins right? May we be a people who unashamedly preach this good news to the world.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for the gospel that has saved us. Thank You for convicting us of our sin and helping us to realize and recognize that we cannot save ourselves. Father I pray that as we get into this small group time in this study, that You would be honored and glorified through it, that we would keep our eyes fixed upon You, and the amazing gospel that You have given to us, all for Your glory alone, we pray in Christ's name, amen.