

Romans 1:1-17

The Power of the Gospel

Intro: Tonight we are beginning or study in the book of Romans! Awesome book / Powerful book!

A) Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome is actually a kind of "fifth gospel."

Been referred to as the Gospel according to grace !

B) The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John bear witness to the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus,

1) the gospel of Romans bears witness to the life-changing power of Jesus.

C) It beckons the mind to stretch, the heart to soar, & the soul to sing! (Swindoll,

Author: Paul the Apostle

Time: A.D. 56 or 57

Place: The City of Corinth – Large Metropolis

At the time of this writing Paul had never been to Rome – but he had a passion to get there.

A) He so desired to meet the saints that were there.

B) If you were with us in our study in the book of Acts – we saw how that desire finally transpired

1) Though not how Paul had planned – Not a Preacher but a Prisoner

C) Not a Cruise ship – but a shipwreck

D) Not an audience in the open square but a captive audience

1) But God moved mightily – the gospel spread throughout.. Palace guard and into the house of Caesar

Paul wrote the book of Romans from the city of Corinth.

A) Unlike many of his other letters – the book of Romans doesn't really address any problem in the Church

B) The Letter to the Romans focuses more on God and His great plan of redemption.

C) God is the most important word in this epistle. Romans is a book about God.

1) The word "God" occurs 153 times in Romans; an average of once every 46 words – this is more frequently than any other NT book.

D) In comparison, note the frequency of other words used in Romans: law (72), Christ (65), sin (48), Lord (43), and faith (40).

1) Romans deals with many themes {Main theme is God

E) Paul wrote the book of Romans in the Winter of while he was in the city of Corinth !

1) Longing to bring Jesus to the city of Rome –

2) Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit He writes the most comprehensive description of Salvation

Historical Context

- The world was under Roman rule
- The world under Rome was full of debauchery of every sort

B) The world of the apostle Paul was a broken world, full of misery, Sexual immorality & injustice.

1) Paganism was rampant – injustice and cruelty was rampant – Homosexuality was rampant

C) Nero was a cruel, immoral and insane emperor

D) The Roman historian Tacitus, in The Annals, observed, "*Nero, who polluted himself by every lawful or lawless indulgence, had not omitted a single abomination which could heighten his depravity.*"

Even more appalling than Nero's obscene debaucheries was his sadistic persecution of the early Christian church.

A) For the followers of Jesus Christ, he had nothing but hatred.

B) Tacitus wrote, "*Nero . . . inflicted the most intense tortures on a class . . . called Christians Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they torn apart by dogs or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames.*" in fact, hundreds of Christians were covered with pitch, hung on poles and burned in his garden while he rode naked on horseback screaming at the top of his lungs.

C) This was the world of the Apostle Paul - a bloody perilous, cruel world.

1) But to this Broken World – God would inspire Paul to write this message – Declaring...made whole in Jesus

D) And the Lord has been working thru this epistle of Romans ever since to reach the lives of broken people in a broken World !

Romans affect on Augustine 4th Century

A) Three centuries after the writing of Romans, there lived a North Africa a Roman named Augustine.

B) Like Paul's world in the first century, Augustine's world was a broken world. The Roman empire was crumbling

C) In his autobiography, The Confessions, Augustine describes the intense spiritual war that raged within him when he was a young man.

D) Recognizing that he was powerless to live a holy life by his own power,

1) he was relentlessly haunted by the memory of past sins. *"I was tossed about, and wasted, he wrote, I boiled over in my fornication*

E) During this time of spiritual anguish, he went out into his garden.

He took with him a hand-copied volume of Romans given him by his mother.

A) Augustine wept bitterly for his lost soul, certain that his sins were beyond forgiveness.

B) And while he poured out his tears, an unusual thing happened

C) From over the hedge of the garden, Augustine heard a child's voice chanting, *"Take up and read; take up and read."*

D) Seeing the book at his feet, -Augustine felt that God was using the child to speak to him,

1) so picked up the book of Romans, opened it, and began reading

E) In those moments, his life was forever changed.

1) Suddenly he understood not only the crisis of his sin but its solution in Jesus Christ.

Romans affect on Martin Luther – 16th century

Like the fourth century world of Augustine, the sixteenth-century world of Martin Luther was a broken world.

A) The Christian church had hardened into an institution with enormous wealth and worldly power.

B) Instead of offering salvation by the preaching of God's Word,

1) the corrupt institutional church had begun selling salvation and other spiritual privileges for money in the form of so-called "indulgences."

C) The church had also become involved in political manipulation of European governments.

1) But The richer and more powerful it became, the more spiritually and morally bankrupt it became.

It was during this time that the Lord touched the heart of a young monk by the name of Martin Luther

A) as he meditated on Romans 1:17 *The just shall live by faith !*

B) Energized by this dynamic insight into spiritual reality, Luther took a bold stand against the corrupt church institution.

C) With Romans as his authority, Luther proclaimed that men and women are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone

D) And his proclamation set off a chain reaction of renewal and revival that spread around the world: **Known as the Protestant Reformation.**

The Book of Romans affect on John Wesley – 18th Century

A) Like Luther's world, 18th century England was a broken world defined by...

➤ rampant unemployment, homelessness, debtor's prisons, hunger, disease, and illiteracy.

B) These problems weighed heavily upon a young minister by the name of John Wesley

1) Wesley spent 5 yrs working himself to death trying to impact England mostly through reform !

C) Visited prisons , poorhouses , distributed cloths, medicine

1) But after 5yrs and being totally exhausted he decided to go to America & try and minister to the Indians !

D) But he was ineffective in his efforts there & returned back to England in defeat, Feeling his whole world again crumbling around him

On May 24, 1738, this dejected young man stood in a crowd at an outdoor evangelistic meeting in Aldersgate Street, London.

A) On the wooden platform, a preacher stood and read from Martin Luther's preface to the book of Romans.

B) There, for the 1st time, John Wesley grasped a truth from Romans that he had missed.....

1) throughout his years of ministry: *Salvation is by grace thru faith alone.*

C) Wesley later recalled, *"My heart was strangely warmed. I trusted in Christ alone for salvation, and received the assurance that he had taken away my sins and saved me from the law of sin and death."*

D) Result was another Revival & Renewal that spread throughout England & across the ocean to America !

E) It seems that whenever this book is studied that the Lord does radical things !

1) Lets Pray that he does so w/ in our own Hearts !
pray

V. 1 *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God*

A) Paul begins w/ an introduction he calls himself a *bondservant or literally a bondslave of Jesus Christ*

B) There were an estimated 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire; and a slave was looked on as a piece of property, not a person.

C) But the term that Paul used *doulos* in the Grk 1) meant one who is willing chose to be a slave out of loving devotion for his master !

D) Exodus 21 insight – Slave serve 7yrs free

1) Loved his master – choose slave life – Earing

E) Paul had willing enslaved himself to Christ, to be His servant and obey His will.

So Paul first identifies himself as a bondservant & 2ndly as an Apostle

A) This word means *"one who is sent by authority with a commission."*

Aa) It was applied in that day to the representatives of the emperor of a king.

B) Note Paul said he was called to be an Apostle !

That is the Key ! Matter of calling

A) It is key to know your calling – Callings Change. – Sam

B) But a call to be a teacher / or a construction worker or a fireman is just as important if that is what God has called you too.

C) Each one of us has a calling & a gifting in the body of Christ / in a particular Church family !

I've Had several conversations with people over the last couple of weeks

A) One person who felt God was calling him to leave CV and a handful of others – called to CV.

B) God calls you into a body –for 2 reasons - #1 do something in you

1) #2 Do something through you. – Time will reveal –

C) happens when you make yourself his bondservant – Willing servant

1) Put aside your plan and agenda for his.

So Paul is a bondservant of Jesus Christ; he is a called apostle; and he is "separated unto the gospel of God."

A)He was separated unto the gospel of God. Paul was a separated Christian, but he was separated to something, not just from something

B)The word separated is a marvelous word it is the Greek word aphorizo, the same word from which we get our word horizon.

1)Ever notice how your Horizon expands when you are taking off in an airplane . See Airport then all S.D. / Ocean/ Mts.

C)The higher you get the wider the horizon.

1) It is wonderful to be separated unto Christ because He brings you to the place where your horizons are enlarged.

So Paul begins Bondservant / Apostle / separated to the gospel of God ! Now he tells us about this gospel !

V. 2-4 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Jesus is at the center of the gospel message

A) Like the "sun" that everything this else orbits around.

B)The center of Christianity is not a teaching or a moral system, it is a Person: Jesus Christ

C)Paul sets Him before us in a 3 fold way in these 3 verses

1st He is the Revealed one *He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,*

D)2nd He is the Reigning One *concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,*

1)both Matthew and Luke trace Jesus lineage through David to reveal his rightful claim to the throne of David.

E)But Paul states Christ's right to reign in two ways. Positionally He is "the seed of David." Personally He is "Jesus Christ our Lord."

3rd aspect Paul reveals Christ as the Resurrected one *declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

A)Easter once a year / everyday - Our faith is based on Fact Christ Rose! **If He didn't our faith is in vain!**

B)That is the starting place for our faith!

1)Not the validity of the Bible –

C)Don't get me wrong the Validity of the Bible is important –

1)**Wonderfully comprised** - but it is not the starting place.

D)But the Validity of the Bible is not the starting place for our faith or defending our faith

Sometimes Christians naively say things like – The Bible says it – I believe it and that settles it.

A)Skeptics love to poke holes in the Bible – Young people get tripped up – at college

B)Prof who challenges Supposed contradictions – which can all be explained

1)But sometimes that takes time

C)Challenge the age of the earth – Really a world wide flood – can a whale really swallow a man? List goes on and on.

Here is what we and our young people need to understand.

A)Our faith starts with the Resurrection. – No Rez – No point.

B)Jesus was a real historical figure – His death is Historically documented and the claims of his Rez also historically documented.

Bb)The Resurrection validates everything else - Flood ? Jesus talked about it as Fact

1)Jonah – Jesus stated it as Fact

C)Sodom and Gomorrah – Adam and Eve – All talked about by Jesus as Fact.

D)Next time someone wants to argue with you about the age of the earth.

1)You know that is really not that important – but I have a question for you what happened to the body of Jesus

E)Buried – tomb empty – what happened – KEY!!!!

THE GOSPEL IS ALL ABOUT JESUS

A)So Paul presents Jesus to us as the Revealed one / reigning one / resurrected one !

B)That is what changed Paul's life – his encounter with a Risen Jesus

1)Goes from Public enemy #1 against Jesus and the church

C)To the #1 Proclaimer of the gospel in the world

V. 5,6 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

A)Notice **grace comes before apostleship / because salvation comes before service !**

B)Jesus says come unto me / before he says *Go into all the world /*

1)Commitment to the truth comes before commitment to the task

C)I also want you to notice that in these verses Paul gives us **a 3 fold mandate for ministry !**

- **1st Attitude** *Obedience to the faith*
- **2nd Assignment** - *among all the nations*

D)The gospel is big enough and great enough for the whole world; it must go out to impact all nations.

I) 3rd Authority - His name

The Next thing that Paul does in his intro is he addresses those whom he is writing v. 7 *To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

A)Even though Paul had never been to Rome the gospel made it's way there and impacted the city – There is a church there. Believers there

B)Acts 2:10 Describes how their were people from Rome who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost – heard Peter – touched

C)At some point they go back home and take the gospel with them.

1)LOVE THIS – The work of God in the Rome the greatest city in the world at the time – was not started by a named apostle

D)No name apostles – Apostle = sent one – they were sent – God moved

To the saints – Set apart to God – From the World – For something

A)Saints are the ones the light shines through

B)Beloved of God !

C)Grace and peace – Twins – always in that order

1)Grace precedes peace – Grace is who God is Him - **GRACE – God's riches.... Expense**

Now what Paul does next – Paul is not just interested in Visiting these saints or preaching to these saints – He has been praying for them.

A)Great practice – when you get a longing for a person or place – start praying for them

B)When you feel like you need to talk to someone – start by praying for them

C)Paul's practice in most of his epistles he shares how he has been praying for the people he is writing to.

1)We can learn much about prayer from studying the prayer life of the apostle Paul

D)Paul's prayer for them was one of thanks

v.8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

E)The church in Rome had a great testimony / their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world !

1)It was their **faith!** - Not their **church size**, not their **wealth**, nor their **busyness...but** their vibrant & steadfast **faith!**

V.9 *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established;12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.*

Paul mentions here that he prays w/ out ceasing for these People /

A)The Greek phrase w/out ceasing speaks of a tickle in the throat

Aa)In other words to pray w/out ceasing means to go thru your day praying as often & reflexively a you would cough to suppress a tickle in your throat

B)Driving down street see someone in the fellowship / Lord brings someone to mind - shoot up a prayer *Lord bless them today*

1)In doing so you are praying w/out ceasing !
Wonderful thing !

C)The thing that was most important on the heart of Paul for the church in Rome why he was writing and why he wanted to get there

1) V.11 He desire was to see them established in Jesus

D)They had great faith – but their faith needed stability

1)Paul was always aware of the challenges to our faith – Persecution - False doctrine –

E)Always concerned about seeing Believers Established!

1)Ephesians 4 Not tossed –

2)Colossians 1:28 **Him we preach warning and teaching..... Present you perfect and complete in Christ**

Now Paul wraps up his introduction by stating what we might call his mission statement in V.14-17

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.

15 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

3 fold Mission statement – His Burden, His boldness, His belief

A)His Burden - **I am** debtor to the World – Greeks and Barbarians

B)Barbarian was anyone who didn't speak Greek – sounded like Bar bar ...

1)Nickname

C)A Debtor is one who has a binding obligation – Paul felt indebted to the world to tell them about Jesus !

Interesting that Paul says I am indebted to you and not to Jesus – why would Paul feel indebted to them. Think of it this way

A)If you lend me \$100—and I am in debt to you until I pay it back. – That is one form of debt.

B)However if someone gives me a \$100 bill and says please give this to Pete – now I am indebted to get the money to Pete

C)It is in this second sense that Paul is “obligated” to everyone, everywhere.

1)God has shared the gospel with him.

D)But God has also commissioned him to declare it to others. So Paul owes people the gospel.

The first mark of the Spirit's work in our lives is that he begins to create a burden in our hearts for others who don't know Jesus

1st His Burden

2nd His Boldness - *I am ready to preach the gospel to you in Rome*

Stedman comments on Paul's eagerness paraphrasing it...

"Not only are my emotions moved by love for the Lord Jesus," says Paul, "but my will is engaged as well. I am not only drawn, I am ready to act."

I love this, because it emphasizes a time to stop talking and start doing.

A)I read years ago of D. L. Moody who said to a man on one occasion, "Why don't you try doing so-and-so?"

B)The man replied, "I've been aiming to do that for a long time." Moody was Blunt

1)In his blunt way, Moody replied, "Well, brother, it's about time you quit aiming and started firing."

C)Quit talking –meeting – Just do it! – Only thing about Nike I like.

1)It is not enough to talk, to think, or to dream.
There must come moments of action.

D)That is what Paul says. I'm ready to go, I'm eager to preach to you.

1)It is action that turns belief into faith.

E)You haven't exercised faith if you have simply believed the truth.

1)You have exercised faith only when you have acted on the truth you have believed.

Paul was always ready to preach the gospel wherever he went/ he wasn't ashamed ! why?

3rd His Belief - *it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*

A)Gospel is a powerful message ! Life changing / transforming !

The Gospel is not advice to people, suggesting that they lift themselves. It is power. It lifts them up. Transform them Leon Morris

Defend the gospel? Doesn't need defending – like a lion just let it out of it's cage and let it do it's thing

Power is in the message not the messenger

A)Nervous anymore – Not me – The message

B)Easter sometimes – Tell myself – The message

The world does not need a better system of education, more social reform, new ideas in religion. It needs the gospel. **The gospel message grips the mind, stabs the conscience, warms the heart, saves the soul and sanctifies the life. It can make drunken men sober, crooked men straight & perverted people pure.**

John Phillips – Romans Commentary

C)Paul's confidence in the gospel is based on it's simplicity and it's sufficiency

It is the Power of God for Salvation all a person has to do is believe

A)It doesn't get more simple than that

B)Its sufficiency - It is the remedy for everyone and it available for everyone

C)Paul wraps up this introductory section with an idea he is going to keep building upon

V.17 ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Guys this is Huge – Justified by Faith –Declared righteous

A)Gospel reveals how unrighteous sinners can be made righteous or just -before a holy God -

B)Starts with faith – believing in Jesus and we CONTINUE TO LIVE BY FAITH simple believing and we live by faith!

C)Here's where many of us are vulnerable to error.

1) We know salvation is *from* faith because we begin by simply embracing the Good News of the gospel

D) but then we get caught up in works we from faith to works.

1) We think we have to mobilize, organize, and agonize over our spirituality.

Paul says No “It’s *from* faith to faith.”

A) The just shall live by faith.

B) Faith is not only the starting point of your salvation—

1) it’s the staying power of your Christian walk.

C) Paul would put it this way in Colossians 2:6 – *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.*”

D) The Same simple way you embraced Jesus by faith – walk with him in that same manner

To the Church in Galatia – Oh foolish... begun in the spirit – made perfect in the flesh

A) The point is faith – not flesh

B) The Just live – by faith in a God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly Ask

C) The flesh puts the focus on me – all I see are limitations

1) Faith puts the emphasis on God – I see endless possibilities –

D) Focus is faith in God the Horizon is Vast!

The Just- (you) Live – by Faith!