

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

October 19, 2022

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

*The Letter to the Romans*

*The Righteousness of God Revealed*

Text – Romans 1:1 – 17

### Introduction

*"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" (Romans 1:11)*

We have examined an introduction to this Letter in the previous message where we were reminded a little bit about the author, audience, and aim or purpose of the Letter. We saw that Paul was writing to these believers in Rome at the end of his third missionary journey while he was visiting Corinth. These Christians in Rome included both Jews and Gentiles and Paul wanted to make sure that they were established in the faith, that their foundation of faith was right.

In this message, we will begin examining the text. As was stated in the last message, the doctrinal section of this letter continues from chapter one through chapter eight. These verses that we look at today will serve as an introduction to this doctrinal section. Here we will see the *Righteousness of God Revealed*.

### Part One - *The Doctrinal Section*

#### I. Paul's Salutation to the Saints at Rome (vs. 1 – 7)

*"Paul, a servant (δοῦλος - doulos) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," (Romans 1:1)*

Notice that Paul calls himself a servant. The word here is *doulos*, which means a slave – one who gives himself up to another's will. This is a stronger word than the word *diakonos*, which is also sometimes translated servant or minister. Though Paul was a great leader, he was also a great servant. Paul served people, but he was willingly a slave to the Lord. Paul recognized that he was a purchased possession of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23) Dr. Paul Fedena made this observation:

"The word Paul uses is "doulos" or "bondslave." There were about 6 million slaves in the Roman empire so Paul's use of this term would resonate with those in bondage. But his surrender was to the Savior, whom he served willingly. So, Paul became a loving slave like those in O.T. times who, when set free, chose instead to stay with their masters even

willingly taking an external badge of slave I.D., i.e., a wooden plug in their earlobe. Paul was not ashamed to be identified as a bondsman of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

### **Illustration told by Harry Ironside:**

There is a story told of an African slave whose master was about to slay him with a spear when a chivalrous British traveler thrust out his arm to ward off the blow, and it was pierced by the cruel weapon. As the blood spurted out, he demanded the person of the slave, saying he had bought him by his suffering. To this the former master ruefully agreed. As the latter walked away, the slave threw himself at the feet of his deliverer, exclaiming, "The blood-bought is now the slave of the son of pity. He will serve him faithfully." And he insisted on accompanying his generous deliverer and took delight in waiting upon him in every possible way.<sup>2</sup>

Notice that Paul was called or appointed to be an apostle. An apostle was "one who is sent by authority with a commission." One of the qualifications for an apostle was that they had to have seen the resurrected Christ. Paul met the resurrected Lord on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. They also had to be personally chosen by the Lord. I believe Peter jumped the gun in Acts 1 when he called for a casting of lots to choose Matthias as a replacement for Judas. Peter was instructed to wait at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came. Paul was chosen by Jesus. (Acts 1:15 – 26; 9:1 – 19)

*"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: **for he is a chosen vessel unto me**, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:15-16)*

### **Preaching Point – We are also called, and commissioned**

God has called us to some things, and He has commissioned us to do some things as well. We who are believers were all called to salvation; and all those who have been saved are commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature. We will also be called individually by the Lord to perform certain tasks that he will equip us to do.

Notice also that Paul was separated unto the gospel. We often speak of being separated from things: sinners, evil, the world. Romans 12:2 says:

*"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)*

---

<sup>1</sup> Fedena, Paul. (2013) *Commentary on Romans*, Chapter 1 "By Special Delivery", (page 1)

<sup>2</sup> Ironside. (Kindle Locations 115-119).

But here Paul declares a positive side of separation. Paul was separated from some things, but he was also separated to some things, and here he states that he was separated unto the gospel.

**Preaching Point – We should not just be separated from evil; we should also be separated to what’s good and right.**

Oftentimes, when we are dealing with our young people, we are always telling them what they can’t do, what they shouldn’t watch or listen to; but there is a very wonderful positive side to God’s will as well. Paul’s new life was an abundant, abounding, and fruitful life that brought to him more joy than anything that he may have given up.

***"(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)"* (Romans 1:2)**

This parenthetical statement refers to “the gospel of God” from the previous verse, meaning that the gospel was prophesied in the Old Testament. The gospel of Christ was alluded to in many Old Testament passages beginning in Genesis 3:15, but there are also many clear pictures of Christ’s sacrifice including Isaiah 53.

*"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Genesis 3:15)

***"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;"* (Romans 1:3)**

The gospel of God concerns the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He was the One who died for our sin, was buried, and was resurrected to prove his power over death and Hell. (1 Corinthians 15:1 – 4)

Notice that Jesus “was made of the seed of David”, indicating that He existed prior to His becoming a man. “According to the flesh”, Jesus was a descendent of David legally through the lineage of his foster father Joseph (Matthew 1), and biologically through the lineage of his mother Mary. (Luke 3)

***"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:"* (Romans 1:4)**

Verse three declares that Jesus was fully human, but verse four tells us that he was also fully God. The Father Himself had declared Jesus to be the Son of God:

*"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."* (Luke 3:22)

*"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him*

*from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Peter 1:16-18)*

His sinless life ("the spirit of holiness") and complete fulfillment of all the demands of the Law also proved that He was the Son of God.

If the declaration of the Father, and a sinless life are not enough to prove His deity, then perhaps His resurrection from the dead will convince you. The gospel message is not only that Christ died for our sins, and was buried but that also:

*"...he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (1 Corinthians 15:4-8)*

***"By whom we have received grace and apostleship (ἀποστολή apostolē), for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:" (Romans 1:5)***

Paul had received the grace of God - God's unmerited favor, but he also received apostleship – a commission – literally "a sending away." Paul was saying that God had saved him, and then sent him to preach the faith of Christ to all nations.

***"Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:" (Romans 1:6)***

The recipients of this letter were among those that Paul was called to minister to. They were "the called of Jesus Christ"; meaning that God had given the gospel to them and many of them had already received the invitation to be saved. (See also Romans 8:28 - 30) In a general way, every human being on the planet has been called or invited to be saved. However, "the called", seems to refer to those who have already been saved, not just to those that God is inviting. The word translated "the called" here is κλητός (klētos), which is usually used as a verb, but here the definite article "the" would indicate that it is a noun referring to those who are called.

***"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:7)***

The "beloved of God, called to be saints" are those who have believed the Gospel. This would be consistent with the statement that we made earlier indicating that this letter was not written primarily to lead people to Christ, but rather it's purpose was to help those who have already received the gift to better understand their salvation.

**Preaching Point – This letter is for us too.**

We must not ever think that we are studying the Bible to see what God was doing with people 2000 years ago. The material in this letter is very relevant for us today. God wants to understand our salvation a little better. He wants us to be better grounded in the faith. He wants us to understand his love for us. It is His love that constrains us.

*"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Ephesians 3:19)*

## II. Paul's Sanction of the Strength of their Faith (vs. 8 – 15)

The word "sanction" means confirmation or recognition meaning that Paul recognized this group of believers in Rome.

### A. Paul was proud of this church.

*"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." (Romans 1:8)*

This church had a reputation for their faith. Christians around the world were talking about what was going on in Rome. As we have already noted, there were some Christian Jews who were kicked out of Rome, which is a sign that they were living godly lives, and declaring the gospel to others:

*"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)*

### Preaching Point:

When was the last time somebody from Jersey Shore Baptist Church was persecuted? Our lack of ill treatment from the world may be an indication of our lack of impact on this dark world. Go to work tomorrow and pass out a dozen tracts, and try to talk to a few people about Jesus Christ, and then watch what happens. You probably won't get a promotion; you will most likely be called up to the boss's office and be reprimanded. When was the last time somebody was reprimanded for sharing his or her faith?

We want the world to take notice of our church, not in a bad way, or even in a prideful way. I want the people that ride by here to know that there is a group of people here in Galloway that love the Lord and are not ashamed of Him.

### B. Paul prayed for this church.

*"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; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." (Romans 1:9 - 10)*

Notice the phrase “the gospel of his Son” in v. 9. In v. 1 he uses the phrase “gospel of God; in v. 16 “the gospel of Christ”; and in 2:16 he takes possession of it by calling it “my gospel”. The gospel was personal to Paul, and it ought to be personal to us as well.

Paul’s love for these people is evident in the language that he uses here.

Regarding Paul’s prayer:

Paul not only prayed for the church, but he also prayed that he would be able to come visit the church. Paul’s prayer request would not be answered for a few years, not until after he was imprisoned and shipwrecked.

Paul’s concern for this church was evident in that he “always” mentioned them to God. This was a church he had not yet visited; made up of many people he didn’t even know. Paul was a busy guy. He already had a lot of people and churches to pray for from places he had already ministered to, yet he still took the time to pray for the believers at Rome.

### **Preaching Point:**

How much effort are we putting into our prayers for other people? Prayer is our declaration of dependence upon God, but it is also duty and delight to lift the names of the people we care about to the Lord.

### **Illustration - Prayer of Concern by Gertrude Grace Sanborn**

I did not read God’s word today,  
Nor did I take the time to pray;  
I busy went upon my way,  
And thus betrayed my Lord.  
I did not lean upon his might  
When new day cares came with the light;  
I tried to walk by my own sight,  
And thus I grieved my Lord.  
I did not raise my voice in praise  
But murmured oft’ on many days,  
And did not to myself say ‘nay,’  
And thus denied my Lord.  
Dear Lord I yearn to be so bent  
Unto thy will and be content

To trust thee for each day and hour,  
And draw from thee Thy grace and power.<sup>3</sup>

C. Paul purposed to visit this church.

***"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" (Romans 1:11)***

Notice that Paul wanted to do something for them, to give something to them. Too many in the ministry want to get something in return, but Paul was a giver. The "spiritual gift" that Paul wanted to give them was the gift of sound doctrine. He wanted this church to be "established" in the faith; just as Priscilla and Aquila expounded unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly. Paul wanted to make sure that this young church, which had no apostolic leadership, was prospering down the right path.

Paul wanted to teach them the Word of God. It is the Word that establishes us (makes us stable). Too many Christians are immature and unstable. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus:

*"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*  
(Ephesians 4:11-16)

Paul said that the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers were "gifts" to the church to help them be perfected or established.

***"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." (Romans 1:12)***

It is a great comfort to know that you are on the same page with others. Paul wanted to make sure that the church at Rome was doctrinally on the right page. John said:

*"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John 1:4)*

---

<sup>3</sup> Waite, D. A. (October 2005) *Romans – Preaching Verse by Verse* (p. 15) Collingswood, N. J.: Bible for Today Press.

***"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."* (Romans 1:13)**

"Now I would not have you ignorant brethren" – this is the first of seven times that this phrase, or a similar one is used. Paul uses it six of the seven times, and the other time it is used by Peter:

1. Romans 11:25 – concerning the blindness of Israel.
2. 1 Corinthians 10:1 – concerning the typology of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and how it relates to the idolatry present in Corinth.
3. 1 Corinthians 12:1 – concerning spiritual gifts.
4. 2 Corinthians 1:8 – concerning the trouble Paul had in Asia.
5. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – concerning the rapture.
6. 2 Peter 3:8 – concerning God's timetable.

To be ignorant simply means that we don't know or don't understand. The bottom line is that God does not want us to be ignorant, and we don't have to be if we "study to shew [ourselves] approved unto God".

"but was let hitherto" - means that Paul was hindered from coming. He was busy in other places, and at the time of this writing (in Corinth at the conclusion of third missionary journey) it might have been possible for him to go, but he was determined to go to Jerusalem, which would result in his being delayed further as he would be arrested and then incarcerated in Caesarea for a couple of years.

**D. Paul was ready to preach to this church.**

***"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."* (Romans 1:14)**

This is the first of the three famous "I am" statements in chapter one. Here he states that he is a debtor. Note – a Barbarian was one who could not speak Greek. In a broader sense, it could refer to somebody that was uncultured or uneducated. Paul stated that he owed a debt to these Gentiles. Why? Perhaps it was because of the abundant grace that was bestowed upon him. In other words, he felt obligated to pay back the Gentiles for all that God had done for him. It could mean that Paul was a debtor to them because they had been a source of provision for him in the past. (See Romans 15:25 – 27 – the saints at Macedonia and Achaia were indebted to the saints at Jerusalem because the gospel ultimately came from them.)

**Preaching Point:**



We owe a great debt too. We don't have to pay back God. We didn't sign a contract of servitude for Him when we trusted Christ. He saved us unconditionally, and He loves us unconditionally. But we ought to be willing to share with the world around us a little of the grace that God has given us. We show our appreciation to Jesus by loving and serving others here on the earth.

**"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."  
(Romans 1:15)**

Here is the second "I am" statement. Paul was ready. Ready means two things:

1. He was willing. Paul was certainly willing. As was already stated, he said he felt obligated.

*"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16)*

He, like Jeremiah, had a burning fire shut up in his bones, and he couldn't refrain from preaching if he wanted to.

2. He was prepared. Paul knew what he was talking about. He knew the Bible. He prepared himself and his message. He was prepared spiritually through dependence upon the Holy Ghost of God.

### **Preaching Point:**

Are you ready, willing, and able to preach the gospel to those around you? Are you ready to tell others how to be saved? Are you trusting in the Holy Ghost to bring you to people who will be receptive to the Words of Life?

### **III. Paul's Statement Regarding Salvation through the Gospel (vs. 16 – 17)**

***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* (Romans 1:16)**

Here is the final and famous "I am" statement. Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel because it was through the gospel that he was saved. The gospel message is "the power" (δύναμις [dynamis]– dynamite) that breaks up the fallow ground of the lost sinner's heart, and gloriously brings him from death unto life. The late evangelist Dwight L. Moody commented that the gospel is like a lion. All the preacher must do is to open the door of the cage and get out of the way!<sup>4</sup> Paul was not ashamed of something that powerful both because of what it could do, and Who it came from. It was God's gospel. Jesus said:

---

<sup>4</sup> Mounce, R. H. (1995). *Romans* (Vol. 27, p. 70). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

*"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)*

Paul later quotes from the Old Testament in Romans:

*"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Romans 10:11)*

### **Preaching Point:**

We cannot be ashamed of Christ or afraid to preach the gospel message. It is the only way for people to be saved.

***"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17)***

This verse is the key verse to the entire epistle. The Christian life is a faith life.

"The just shall live by faith" – this is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4. Here in Romans the emphasis of this verse is on the two words, "the just", in other words Romans deals extensively with the doctrine of justification. How does a person become justified? How can he be seen as sinless in the sight of God? By faith!

This phrase is also repeated in Galatians 3:11 where the emphasis is on "shall live", and in Hebrews 10:38 where the emphasis is on "by faith." We are not only saved by grace through faith, but we are also to live by faith as well. The Christian life is a life of faith, not religious traditions, rituals, or requirements.

*"from faith to faith"* – the gospel is passed down from those who had faith to believe to those who have faith to believe. We receive the "righteousness of God" through faith:

*"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:" (Romans 3:22)*

Have you been saved by faith?

Are you living by faith