

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we begin this amazing letter that Paul wrote to the church in Rome!

It has been said of the book of Romans that it is “The greatest book ever written.” I would have to agree. Not that the whole Bible is not important, but this is probably one of the most influential Bible books! It gives to us a systematic or orderly presentation of Christian Theology!

Let me share with you the importance of the book of Romans. And, as you will see, I believe if this is the only book of the Bible that we have, it is all we would need to get saved! Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

No other book of the Bible more completely sets forth the great doctrines of the Christian faith than Paul’s epistle to the Romans. No other writing has more powerfully confronted the human mind with the mind of God. No other book so systematically destroys human alibis [excuses, reasons], pretenses, and attempts at self-justification. In Romans, Paul’s magnum opus [work of art, masterpiece], he thoroughly demolishes with unanswerable logic every argument a person can muster against the claims of God.

Romans has rightly been called “the Constitution of Christianity.” Some refer to it as “the Christian Manifesto,” and still others have dubbed it “the Cathedral of the Christian faith.” . . . This epistle stands at the head of Paul’s epistles as the brazen altar did before the Holy Place.

You'll remember that no one could enter the Tabernacle until having passed the brazen altar. Likewise, no one can enter the great doctrinal epistles of the New Testament without first passing Romans, for it is the gateway to the New Testament truth.

- Woodrow Kroll, Romans – Righteousness in Christ, p. xi

Those are pretty powerful words regarding this book, and, as you will see, they are correct. I want to share with you the outline of this book, because, as you will see, Paul lays it all out for us. Where we are at and what God is doing in our lives. And this will be on our web page, on the notes from our study tonight if you are trying to write them down and can't keep up. It is probably better to listen and then go to the web page to get the outline. The outline goes like this,

ROMANS 1:1-7	OPENING SALUTATION
ROMANS 1:8-17	PAUL'S INTRODUCTION
ROMANS 1:18-3:20	CONDEMNATION – Paul shows us that the whole world is guilty before God.
ROMANS 3:21-5:21	JUSTIFICATION – Paul shows us the righteousness of God that has been revealed from heaven apart from the works of the Law.
ROMANS 6-8	SANCTIFICATION – Paul shows us the power of God's Spirit to live a life that is pleasing to God.
ROMANS 9-11	ELECTION – Paul shows us that we are chosen by God and yet, free will on our part to choose the Lord or reject Him. Truly a controversial section!
ROMANS 12:1-15:13	APPLICATION – Paul now lays it on the line and shows us that it is not only important to know these truths, but you must also apply them to your life! This is a very practical section, you might say it is where the rubber meets the road, if you are not applying the things of God to your life, then you are not walking as you should!

ROMANS 15:14-16:24**PAUL'S CONCLUSION****ROMANS 16:25-27****CLOSING BENEDICTION**

And let me say this. After Paul makes his opening salutation or greeting and his introduction, Paul presents his opening arguments as a prosecuting attorney showing that man is a sinner separated from God and his opening statements are powerful. And we will begin to look at this next time. But listen carefully to how Paul condemns sinful man before God.

First of all, in Romans 1:18-32 Paul shows that *the unrighteous heathen are condemned by creation*. For the heavens declare the glory of God, they show that there is a God!

Then, in Romans 2:1-16 Paul shows that *the self-righteous moralist is condemned by their conscience* because God has placed in our heart what is right and what is wrong!

And then, in Romans 2:17-29 Paul shows how *the super religious person is condemned by the commandments of God*. That should just make sense. One sin will keep you out of heaven and we have millions more than just one! In fact, we are born in sin and we will die in sin apart from Christ.

It is out of this that Paul makes his conclusion regarding who is righteous before God apart from Christ in Romans 3:10-26 with his powerful statement in verse 23, "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" There is no excuse, apart from Christ we are sinners separated from God but in Christ we have His righteousness imputed into our lives by faith!

But, if we repent of our sins, if we ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, we are justified before Him and the Lord is sanctifying us, making us more like Him! And the work that He has begun in us, He will finish!

Some powerful lessons for us to learn as we go through the book of Romans!

Just a little more background information before we dig into this powerful letter, so you can see how this all fits together.

This letter to the Romans was written by Paul at the close of his third missionary journey from Corinth, at the house of Gaius according to Romans 16:23.

Some have put the date of this letter being written between 56 and 58 A. D., probably in 57 A. D. But whatever the case, it was written before Paul went to Jerusalem with gifts for the church in Jerusalem from the Gentile churches.

Now, during his three-month stay in Corinth, (Acts 20:2-3), this letter was written and given probably to Phoebe who was from the church of Cenchrea, who then delivered this letter to the churches in Rome, (Romans 16:1-2).

The theme of this letter can be summed up as follows: ***THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!***

And, like I have said, many feel this is the most important book, theologically speaking, in the entire New Testament, as I do.

The reason being is that it gives to us a systematic approach or presentation of Christian theology, it paints for us why the Gospel is so important to every single person, as I have said. This letter to the Romans shows us justification by faith or “How can a person get to heaven?”

Now, who established the church at Rome remains a mystery. We know it wasn't established by Paul, he tells us in chapter 1 that although he had wanted to visit Rome on numerous occasions something had always prevented him from doing so.

It wasn't by Peter, as the Roman Catholic Church likes to tell you. And, for that matter, I don't believe it was established by any other apostle.

The reason I say that is because what Paul said in Romans 15:20, “**And so I have made it my aim to present the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation.**”

More than likely the church in Rome was started by a group of Jewish Christians who came there from Judea, maybe fleeing the persecution there in Jerusalem. Also, many were there from other areas, even Rome during Pentecost as we are told in Acts 2:10, “**. . . visitors came from Rome, both Jews and proselytes.**”

Some of them could have been part of the thousands of people that came to Christ that day! However it started, the church was established before Paul wrote this letter to them!

To sum this up for us, one writer put it like this. He wrote,

The epistle to the Romans speaks to us today just as powerfully as it spoke to men of the first century. It speaks morally, about adultery, fornication, homosexuality, hating, murder, lying, and civil disobedience. It speaks intellectually, telling us that the natural man is confused because he has a reprobate mind. It speaks socially, telling us how we are to relate to one another. It speaks psychologically, telling us where true freedom comes to deliver men from the burden of guilt. It speaks nationally, telling us our responsibility to human government. It speaks internationally, telling us the ultimate destiny of the earth and especially the future of Israel. It speaks spiritually, answering man’s despair by offering hope for the future. It speaks theologically, teaching us the relationship between the flesh and the spirit, between law and grace, between works and faith. But most of all, it profoundly brings God Himself to us.

- John MacArthur, Romans

Make no mistake about it, the letter that Paul wrote to the Romans has life changing truth for us today and we must ask the Holy Spirit to show us the things we need to learn and apply to our lives. In fact, the first 11 chapters deal with doctrine, and then, as we get to Romans chapter 12 we see the application of these truths of God as Paul wrote, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** Romans 12:1-2.

We have a lot of ground to cover so with that as our background, let’s begin reading in Romans chapter 1, beginning in verse 1, and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through the Word of God and Paul’s letter to the Romans!

ROMANS 1

VERSE 1

We see that right from the start, we know who wrote this letter. And what I want you to see is that Paul did not elevate himself to some superior position. He did not give himself a title of Pope or whatever.

No, Paul starts out by saying he is a **“bondslave”** of Jesus Christ, DOULOS in the Greek. And let’s face it, being a slave has bad connotations to it and no one wants to be a slave.

But that is not true because all slave owners were not bad. We see this example in Exodus chapter 12 where a bondslave was someone who had served his master and now is set free, he no longer has to be a slave.

But, because he loves his master he wants to remain a slave and freely serve him, not out of obligation or constraint, but out of love.

Thus, they would take him down to the doorpost of the house and pierce his ear with an awl and place a gold ring in his ear signifying to all that he is a bonds slave.

Paul is saying that he is a bonds slave of Jesus Christ and his Master, Jesus, is perfect and has only what is best for Paul, and for us.

You see, that is how we are to serve the Lord, out of love, freely. We are bonds slaves of Jesus Christ, not out of constraint, but out of our love for Him and His love for us!

What are the marks in your life that tell others you are a bonds slave of Jesus? What things are manifested in your life that others will see? Will they see your service unto the Lord out of love or out of constraint?

Remember what we read in Romans chapter 12 in our introduction, that we are to give our lives as a living sacrifice to our Lord, to allow Him to use us as He wants, and that is the heart of a bondservant!

Not only is Paul a bonds slave, but Paul also says that he is an “**apostle**”, called by God to this position.

The word “**apostle**” means one who is “sent out” and in a sense, we are all apostles, sent out with the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Gospel message.

Now let me be clear on this because there is much confusion today in the church. We are not part of the primary apostles, the 12, or prophets for that matter because I believe those ministries have passed off the scene.

Some may argue but notice what Paul said in Ephesians 2:20-22, **“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”**

You see, they have laid the foundation and you don't keep laying a foundation, so those offices have passed off the scene and now the evangelists, pastor/teachers and teachers are building the rest of the structure.

Then Paul says that he has been **“separated to the Gospel of God.”**

The word **“Gospel”** comes from the Greek word EUANGELION and Paul uses it some thirty-six times in this epistle. This word simply means “good news” or “glad tidings.”

I know that some would like to make their own doctrine on what the Good News, the Gospel is all about, but as we are going to see in a few minutes, it is God becoming flesh, dwelling among us, dying on the cross of Calvary for our sins and rising the third day from the dead having paid in full the penalty for our sins.

That is Good News especially when you place in front of it all the bad news that has permeated generation after generation, all our sins are forgiven in Christ, which is truly great news!

Now this phrase, **“separated to the Gospel of God”** some feel is speaking of his past, being a Pharisee.

Clarke put it like this, “St. Paul may here refer to his former state as a *Pharisee*, which literally signifies a *separatist*, or one *separated*. *Before* he was separated unto the service of his own *sect*; *now* he is separated unto the Gospel of God.”

And Poole tells us, “Some think he alludes to the name of Pharisee, which is from separating: when he was a Pharisee, he was separated to the law of God; and now, being a Christian, he was separated to the gospel of God.” It is an interesting thought!

One last point and that is Paul uses the word “God” some 153 times in this letter. That is an average of once every 46 words and it is used more frequently here than in any other New Testament book. In other words, Romans is a letter about God!

VERSES 2-6

Here is a fallacy that some people have about the Bible. They think that the New Testament, the Gospel is new. That it is nothing more than the clever invention of man. But the Gospel is not something that was new and invented by man.

In fact, beginning in Genesis 3:15, where the Lord said that He would bring salvation through the seed of the woman, throughout the Old Testament, the prophets spoke of the coming Messiah.

We see such passages like Isaiah 1:18, “**“Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.”**”

This was not something that the Law could do, it could never take away your sins. The animal sacrifices could never take away your sins, they could only cover them for a time, until you sinned again.

But the Scriptures tell us that the Messiah will take away our sins, cast them as far as the east is from the west, to be remembered no more! (Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 38:17, 43:25)

So the Gospel, this good news, is not something new, but it is the very old, you might say. It was part of the plan of God!

Listen carefully to what we are told in Jeremiah 31:31-34, **“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”**

That is something that no sacrifice could accomplish, the taking away of sin forever! Well, let me clarify that. No sacrifice except the sacrifice that God had made for us as Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary to pay in *FULL* the *PENALTY* for our *SINS*!

And I think Paul starts out with a bang here as he makes this powerful point of the humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ in verses 3 and 4 of Romans chapter 1.

Paul is clearly showing us the humanity of Jesus – *born of the seed of David*.

And then he shows us the deity or the divinity of Jesus, – *declared to be the Son of God*.

And the Greek word for “**declared**” is HORIZO and we get our English word “horizon” from it. In other words, in response to Jesus being God, He has always been God and will always be God just as the Horizon stretches forth across the sky!

Paul, in Philippians 2:6-11 says this in regard to the incarnation, **“who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

Jesus did not try to rob the position of God because He is God. And when God became flesh, when He dwelt among us, He emptied Himself of some of His Godly attributes which did not make Him any less God, for as I have said, Jesus has always been God and He always will be God!

Then in John 5:18 we are told, **“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”**

Why did the Jews want to kill Jesus? Because He, being a man, made Himself equal with God and the Jews rejected Jesus being God, they rejected Him being the Messiah!

And for those who still want to deny the deity of Jesus, listen to what God the Father has to say regarding Jesus, the Son, in Hebrews 1:8-9, **“But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’”**

If God the Father calls Jesus God then who am I to argue with that! And yet, many do and if they do, they will die in their sins! Not because I said it, but Jesus said, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.”** John 8:24. Remember, the **“He”** was added for clarity but in doing so it takes away the point. Jesus is saying if you don’t believe that **“I AM”** then you will die in your sins. If you do not believe that ***I AM*** Almighty God! So that is a very important point!

Now, let me ask you this. What is the evidence of Jesus being the Messiah?

Paul tells us, **“by the resurrection from the dead.”** He had the power to rise the third day from the dead!

Jesus said in John 10:18, **“No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”**

And the reality is, His whole life was a testimony to the fact that He is the Messiah as He fulfilled down to the tiniest detail all that the prophets said regarding Him!

Let me show you what I mean. John the Baptist has been placed in prison by Herod Antipas. The reason being is that he came against the marriage of Herod Antipas and that he married his brother Phillip’s wife, Herodias. So John is thrown in prison for coming against this relationship.

And John begins to doubt about Jesus being the Messiah. Things were not going the way he thought they should and he had a lot of time on his hands and he doubted. And this doubt caused him to send a couple of his followers to Jesus and ask Him if He is the One or is there another we should be looking for. It is an honest question born out of doubt on John’s part!

So as these disciples of John the Baptist come to Jesus they ask Him if He is the One or should they be looking for another? And Jesus was not angry with John for this question. It was an honest question.

Now think of how Jesus could have answered this question. ***“Of course I AM! What is wrong with you guys?”***

No, Jesus does not answer them this way. What Jesus tells these men of John is to listen and look at the miracles that were done and then go back and tell John those things you have seen and heard.

Again, what we see here is Jesus authenticating His ministry by fulfilling what the Old Testament prophets said that the Messiah would do when He came! And Jesus does the same with us when we doubt. He brings us to the Word of God so we can see and hear what He is saying to us and we can be encouraged as the disciples of John were and as John would be when they told him these things!

Let me ask you another question. How are we saved?

I realize that this is not a hard question, and yet, today we see so many people confused over this issue and the Bible is very clear.

We are not saved through works, being baptized, being good, being a member of a church, keeping the Ten Commandments, obeying the Sermon on the Mount, serving God, tithing, being nice, none of these things will save you!

My NKJV puts it this way, **“through whom”** but others put it like this and I think that is what **“through whom”** is speaking only this is much clearer.

Paul simply says that we are saved “**through Him**” not through us and what we have done. You see, all you must do is receive the gift of grace that God has given to us by faith, repent of your sins, ask Him to be Lord and Savior of your life and you are saved!

It is not just a head knowledge of who Jesus is nor is it just a belief that He is God, for James tells us “**You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble!**” James 2:19.

You see, it is a head knowledge that sinks deep down into our lives, our hearts and is manifested in our actions, it is a faith that works not for salvation but is the evidence that you are saved!

It is as one dying saint said, “Grace is the only thing that can make us like God. I might be dragged through heaven, earth, and Hell and I would still be the same sinful, polluted wretch unless God Himself should cleanse me by His grace.”

Then it is out of that relationship we become apostles, or sent out ones, ambassadors for Jesus.

Paul puts it this way in II Corinthians 5:18-21, “**Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

As we make peace with God through Jesus we then can bring to others the peace of God, that reconciliation through Jesus Christ, we are His ambassadors!

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

The story is told of a very wealthy man who had many valuable art treasures. His only son was quite ordinary but was dearly loved. When the son died unexpectedly as a young man, the father was so deeply grieved that he died a few months later. The father's will stipulated that, at his death, all his art works were to be publicly auctioned and that a painting of his son was to be auctioned first.

On the day of the auction the specified painting was displayed and the bidding was opened. Because neither the boy nor the artist were well known, a long time passed without a bid being offered.

Finally, a long-time servant of the father and friend of the boy timidly bid seventy-five cents, all the money he had. When there were no other bids, the painting was given to the servant.

At that point the sale was stopped and an official read the remainder of the will, which specified that whoever cared enough for his son to buy the painting of him would receive all the rest of the estate.

That touching story illustrates God's provision for fallen mankind. Anyone who loves and receives His Son, Jesus Christ, will inherit the heavenly Father's estate, as it were.

- John MacArthur, Romans 1

Exactly! We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and our lives are a reflection of what God is doing on the inside. The work that He is doing overflows in our lives and touches the lives of others.

The humanity, the deity of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation. His deity seen in His resurrection and the proof that He is the Messiah through His life. And salvation is only through Him, there is no other way of salvation apart from Christ!

VERSE 7

We have spoken about how the church in Rome got started, so I am not going to go into detail again. But what we can say is that the church was started by common people doing a mighty work through the power of God!

Believers were sharing their faith and the church grew! And keep in mind that these Christians in Rome were strong, they had to be tough as Bruce tells us, “The Christians of Rome were unpopular – reputed to be ‘enemies of the human race’ and credited with such vices as incest and cannibalism. In large numbers, then, they became the victims of the imperial malevolence – and it is this persecution of Christians under Nero that traditionally forms the setting for Paul’s martyrdom.”

And look at the love Paul has for these believers he has not even seen yet, the love of God extended to them through Paul.

Paul also says that these believers were “**called to be saints.**” The words “*to be*” are in italics, they were put there by the translators. But they were not called “*to be*” saints, because they were already saints! These believers in Rome were “**called saints**” because that is what they were in Christ!

We have messed up the idea of what saints are. Today, in the Catholic Church, several years after her death, Mother Teresa has made her way to becoming a saint, this was back in 2016. And, in the Roman Catholic Church you must be dead to be a saint, do some miracles in your life that can be verified, and it is a man-made idea, it is not Biblical.

Most people have the idea that saints are special people in religious history. But the truth is, there are only two categories of people: saints and pagans. Therefore, if you're a believer - you're a saint.

And think about this. It really doesn't take a theologian to figure this out. Paul was not writing to the dead believers in Rome, but living saints and the only reason they were called saints is because they have believed and received Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives.

Thus, in Christ we are all saints of God.

You see, the word "**saint**" or HAGIOS in the Greek means "set apart" or "sacred." Obviously that can't be done by our own efforts, our own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Jesus imparted to our lives by faith!

Let me show you what I mean. There was a little boy who attended a church that had beautiful stained-glass windows depicting St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John.

One day, when asked in his Sunday-school class, "What are saints?" he answered, "They're people who the light shine through."

I love that answer because that is what people should see in us. The light of God shining through us!

Then Paul speaks of the Siamese Twins of the New Testament, Grace and Peace!

Paul uses the Greek greeting of CHARIS and the Jewish greeting, SHALOM, linking both Jew and Gentile together into the family of God.

The word “**grace**” speaks of getting what we don’t deserve, and in this case, it is eternal life when we should get death because of our sins.

The word “**peace**” speaks of rest. The thing is, you will never find Paul speak of the peace and grace of God, never in that order, why? Because you can’t experience the peace of God until you first know the grace of God in your life, you have made peace with God through Jesus Christ!

So, as we have seen, here in Romans 1:1-7 we have looked at Paul’s opening salutation. Now, as we move on, we will see Paul’s introduction to this letter, in Romans 1:8-17.

VERSES 8-15

First of all, Paul didn’t meet any of these believers before and yet, look at the love that he had for them.

Also, Paul was aware of their faith because their faith was being spoken of in other parts of the world. In other words, their faith was real, it wasn’t dead, they lived what they believed, and it was a light to those who were living in darkness. So much so that word spread of their faith without telephones, radio, television, internet and-so-on.

We see that we the Thessalonian believers as Paul wrote of their faith, **“And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”** I Thessalonians 1:6-10.

Yes, they faced affliction, persecution, but their faith was strong, and it was an example and encouragement to other believers.

May our faith be that real, may we live what we believe because as we walk in Christ, people will notice!

And Paul lifted them up in prayer and what an encouragement that must have been for them. And maybe that is why they were so strong, someone was praying for them! May we lift each other up, pray for them. Use the phone list and keep the body of Christ here at Calvary in prayer!

And we see here that Paul lay's his heart open to these believers in Rome. He desires to come to them, not to be exalted, not for a sight-seeing tour of the city, but that he may bless them, encourage them to continue in the work, to forge ahead and not become discouraged! His desire was to build them up in the faith!

That passion to bring the Gospel message anywhere and everywhere was in the heart of Paul who was just waiting for God's timing, God's will in the matter.

God promised Paul he would go to Rome and just as God promised, God will bring it to pass, maybe not like Paul thought, for he will go as a prisoner!

But make no mistake about it, Paul was a man who was ready to preach and to serve, he was willing to suffer for the Gospel sake, he would do whatever it took, even unpleasant work, and Paul was ready to die for the Lord.

It is hard to stop a man like that! Of Paul, Newell said, “Talk of your brave men, your great men, O world! Where in all history can you find one like Paul? Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, marched with the protection of their armies to enforce their will upon men. Paul was eager to march with Christ alone to the center of this world’s greatness entrenched under Satan with the word of the cross, which he himself says is to the Jews, and offence; and to the Gentiles, foolishness.”

That truly puts things into perspective for us. Paul did not count his life dear to him but was more interested in seeing people come to the Lord and then being built up in the faith. What a heart this man had.

There was “A Moravian [who] was about to be sent by Zinzendorf to preach in Greenland. He had never heard of it before; but his leader called him, and said, ‘Brother, will you go to Greenland?’ He answered, ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘When will you go?’ ‘When my boots come home from the cobbler;’ and he did go as soon as his boots came home. He wanted nothing else but just that pair of boots, and he was ready to go. Paul, not even waiting for his boots to come home from the cobbler, says, ‘I am ready.’ Oh, it is grand to find a man so little entangled that he can go where God would have him go, and can go at once.” (Spurgeon)

I pray that as we minister to people we would be praying for them, wanting to bless them, see fruit in their lives, as Paul did.

I pray that when God calls us to a work we are ready to go, not with excuses, but to walk in faith.

And how much easier it is to tear down, to destroy a person than it is to build them up in the faith, to bless them! It is as Paul said in Hebrews 10:24-25, “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**”

Have you stirred someone up today? And I don't mean in a bad way, which is easy to do. But have you stirred someone up in love and good works? Have you encouraged them in the faith to walk, to move forward? If not, there is still time in the day!

VERSES 16-17

This is the focus or theme of this letter that Paul wrote to the Romans, *the Gospel of Jesus Christ!* And Paul tells us that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Why is that? Why is Paul not ashamed to speak forth the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Because Paul believed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ “**is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes . . .**” It is what we need to hear if we are going to be saved!

Now the Greek word that is translated “**power**” is DUNAMIS, and we get our English word “*dynamite*” from it.

Scott works with dynamite and he understands firsthand that dynamite is used to move things, it has explosive power.

The same is true with the Gospel. It has the power to change people's lives, to move them from the power of darkness to the power of light and it is an explosive change!

Morris tells us regarding the power of the Gospel, “The gospel is not advice to people, suggesting that they lift themselves. It is power. It lifts them up. Paul does not say that the gospel brings power, but that it is power, and God’s power at that.”

Absolutely and yet, many today negate the power of the Gospel and they look at programs or this or that and leave out what is needed the most!

And, like back then, the problem today, is the Gospel is not very attractive to people. Why is that?

Because we see that in the Gospel man’s sin is exposed and their hopelessness to do anything about it on their own.

Thus, to make the Gospel more appealing we change the message as Geoffrey Wilson wrote, “The unpopularity of a crucified Christ has prompted many to present a message which is more palatable to the unbeliever, but the removal of the offense of the cross always renders the message ineffective. An inoffensive gospel is also an inoperative gospel. Thus Christianity is wounded most in the house of its friends.”

How true that is. In many churches you will not hear about sin and I wonder what people are being saved from? Let us not be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation. How do we obtain it? The Gospel is for all who believe – do you believe?

And when I say “**believe**” it is not just head knowledge, because many know of Jesus. It is repenting of your sins and asking Him to be Lord and Savior of your life and once you do, you are seen as justified before the Lord, there is no record of your sins, none of them!

And from that moment on the sanctification process begins where God is working in you, making you more like Him, and it is a process that takes a lifetime, but He will complete it!

So, as we look at this wonderful gift that God has given to us, we see that God reckons us sinners not as sinners because of our faith in Jesus. It is not that God found a reason to prove us righteous, but as Murray said: “The righteousness which is unto justification is one characterized by the perfection belonging to all that God is and does. It is a ‘God-righteousness’.”

It is as we are told in II Corinthians 5:21, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**” He took our sin and gave to us His righteousness. What a gift God has given to us!

Anders Nygren says, “. . . ‘the righteousness of God’ is a righteousness originating in God, prepared by God, revealed in the gospel and therein offered to us.” This is a righteousness from God and not us, never forget that!

And, like I have said, we are not only saved by faith, but we now live by faith!

Then why do we go back to the idea of a works salvation? Paul said in Galatians 3:1-3, “**O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**” You see, a salvation by faith not by works!

I like the way that J. Vernon McGee summed this up for us regarding faith. He wrote, “From faith to faith” simply means out of faith into faith. God saves you by faith, you live by faith, you die by faith, and you’ll be in heaven by faith. Let me use a homely illustration. Quite a few years ago I was born deep in the heart of Texas. When I was born, my mother said the doctor lifted me up by my heels, gave me a whack, and I let out a cry that could be heard on all four borders of that great state. I was born into a world of atmosphere and that whack started me breathing. From that day to this I have been breathing atmosphere. From air to air, from oxygen to oxygen. Much later, in the state of Oklahoma, I was born again. I was saved by faith, and from that time on it has been by faith – from faith to faith.”

That is it, we are living by faith and that is so important, especially as we face different challenges in our life. Our faith is in Him, He will see us through. He saved us and thus, He can certainly sustain us!

We are going to stop here because what Paul speaks of next is important for us to understand, especially in the days we are living in, and I don’t want to rush through it. It begins the section on condemnation and you might think that is horrible.

But it is so important that we understand where we stand before God before we can come to Him and ask Him to forgive us of our sins. We need to know we are sinners.

And if you really think that God is unfair, that He is mean, that He is unloving because of the condemnation that He brings upon us, please understand, He is just showing us where we are at apart from Him and yes, we don’t like the picture.

That is good, it is what you do next that is also important. That you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life!

You see, God has given to us Good News, the Gospel Message and I will close with that and next time we will finish up this chapter. It is the Good News that God has given to us as Jesus spoke in John 3:16-21, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**

God does not hate us, but He loves us more than we will ever know. He sent His Son to die for our sins so that we could not only live with Him, but we can fellowship with Him right now. You see, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! Are you in Him or I guess I should say, is He in you?