

## BCM Bible Study – August 27/28, 2014

### Romans 1:1-17 – The Gospel of God

Author: “Paul, a servant (bondservant) of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.” - Rom 1:1

#### Background and Side Notes:

Because he was a Roman citizen, he had a unique passion for those in the assembly of believers in Rome. It is interesting to note that unlike many of the other epistles, Paul did not plant this church in Rome and had never been to Rome when he wrote it.

{No other missionaries had been to Rome yet, so how is it that Paul could write “to all who are beloved of God” and sent greetings to those who attend a church at Prisca and Aquilla’s house? There are many different theories, but scripture does not specify; theories include the foreign travelers among the 3000 converted in Acts (Acts 2), Jewish Christians settling back in Rome, or some Pauline converts who traveled to Rome. }

Paul planned to go to Jerusalem to deliver the financial gifts from the churches, then go to Rome, and then on to Spain. (Acts 19:21) The Holy Spirit prompted him before he left that there would be trouble in Jerusalem for him (Acts 21:10-14).

What if he were unable to make it to Rome? Then he must write them a letter so comprehensive that the Christians in Rome had the gospel, even if he were not able to visit them. Because of all this, Romans is different than other letters Paul wrote to New Testament churches. Other New Testament letters focus more on the church and its challenges and problems. The letter to the Romans focuses more on God and His great plan of redemption.” – Guzik

Most agree he wrote this letter from Corinth as he wintered there on his third missionary Journey around 53-58 AD. His recipients were Jewish and Gentile Christians.

He was arrested in Jerusalem in 60 AD and would eventually make it to Rome as a prisoner. Phoebe, who was a member of the church near Corinth (Romans 16:1), most likely carried the letter to Rome.

Are there any other questions or comments about Romans before we dive in?

Most of the letters in the NT follow a similar format: sender, recipient, greeting, thanksgiving or blessing, theme, argument/ theological discussions, admonitions, practical matters, greetings, personals, prayer or doxology (formula of praise to God).

#### Read v1-7

V.1 “Paul, a servant of Christ.” The “servant” or “slave” Paul talks about refers to one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another; his will is altogether consumed in the will of the other.

What can we learn from how Paul identifies himself to Christ? Do we identify ourselves in this way? Do you think Christians today should take on this title?

V.1 “Set apart for the gospel of God.” Separation, in the Bible, always speaks of separating from

something to something. For example, we do not simply separate ourselves from sin. Instead, we separate ourselves from sin and replace it - with obedience to God. (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

What do you think Paul meant by being separated unto the gospel of God?

(Paul was a Pharisee. The word Pharisee means separated. Pharisees were proud about their being separated unto the law to a fault that this was the way they found themselves justified before God instead of relationship. As a Pharisee, Paul had been separated unto the law of Moses. But now, Paul has been separated unto the gospel of God.)

Vs 1-6 Paul gives a summary of the gospel for which he had been set apart. What do we learn about the gospel from these verses?

Which aspect of the description he gives means the most to you right now?

What do verses 1-7 tell us about Jesus?

{We learn a lot about Jesus – He is the Son of God, His was a man and his name is Jesus, His title is Christ, He is Lord.}

What do the terms in v7 indicate about the way God views us?

Read v8-15

V12. What does this mutual encouragement look like - within the church, the BCM, your friends?

Read v16-17

These verses can be looked at as the main theme of the entire book of Romans.

Is it easy for you to agree with Paul that you are “not ashamed of the gospel”?

Paul calls the gospel the “power of God for salvation” - how have you seen this power in your life?

V17 was one of the key verses in Martin Luther's personal transformation, and consequently the Protestant reformation. He was a disciplined monk who struggled with deep feelings of guilt for not living up to God's standards, and this verse was to him, “a gateway to heaven.”

What is so significant about the ideas in this verse?

What does righteousness mean? How do you understand righteousness?

Memorize verses 16-17.

Theme of Romans:

“I am not ashamed of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes—to save the Jews first, and then to save non-Jews.<sup>17</sup> The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, “But those who are right with God will live by faith.” NCV

## Terms:

**Apostle:** The word apostle means "sent one." It can be used in a general sense (Acts 14:14), but in almost all biblical instances, it refers specifically to the disciples who were specially selected by Christ to be the first missionaries to the Jews and the Gentiles and the first leaders of the church. Because Paul was called by Christ after the ascension of Christ, Paul's apostleship was challenged. It became necessary for Paul to defend and assert his apostleship.

**Set apart (Pharisees):** They emerge out of a group called the Hasidim (*pious ones*) who helped overthrow Seleucid rule during the Maccabean revolt. Not long after the revolt, the Maccabean leaders became corrupt in the eyes of the Hasidim. The Maccabean descendants had succumbed to Hellenistic influence and had also illegitimately seized control of the office of High Priest. It is out of this Hasidim that the Pharisees emerge. The Pharisees believed one should devote oneself to complete obedience to every detail of the law and to separate themselves from all influences that might interfere with that devotion. It is this devotion to the law, both written and oral for which the Pharisees are later criticized since it has replaced faith and relationship with God in how they view themselves as justified. Pharisees considered themselves just and righteous by their own standard of righteousness, by the carrying out the law.

**Gospel:** When Paul speaks of the gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ, or my gospel, Paul is referring to the plan of salvation. The good news is that Jesus Christ came and was crucified and raised again from the dead according to the scriptures, so that all may have eternal life. (1 Cor 15:1-4). You do not need to have all of your problems settled and all of your questions answered. Simply come to Christ as a lost sinner who needs forgiveness.

**Spirit of Holiness:** Referring to Jesus' own spirit. Spirit is the element in man which gives him the ability to think of God.

**Jesus – Son of God:** All created beings are His sons because He created them or to contrast believers and unbelievers (Romans 8:14). OT and NT refer to A Son of God who was THE Son of God. To claim to be the Son of God was to claim to be equal (one and the same) with God Himself (John 5:18, John 19:7, He accepted worship). **He was always the Son of God, he did not "become" son of God:** He called himself the Son of God. The legal proof and declaration that he was truly the son of God was in His resurrection (Romans 1:4).

**Salvation:** The deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin which is granted to those who accept by faith God's conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus.

**Righteousness:** God's standard to which man is expected to conform. Dictionaries define "righteousness" as behavior that is morally justifiable or right. Such behavior is characterized by accepted standards of morality, justice, virtue, or uprightness. The Bible's standard of human righteousness is God's own perfection in every attribute, every attitude, every behavior, and every word. The bad news is that true and perfect righteousness is not possible for man to attain on his own; the standard is simply too high. The good news is that true righteousness is possible for mankind through the cleansing of sin by Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We have no ability to achieve righteousness in and of ourselves. But Christians possess the righteousness of Christ, because "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." On the cross, Jesus exchanged our sin for His perfect righteousness so that we can one day stand before God and He will see not our sin, but the holy righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

**To the Jew first and also to the Gentile:** Paul mentions this because he wants to humble both Jew and Gentile and make them deeply aware that they depend entirely on mercy, not on themselves or their tradition or ethnic connections. The Jews are first over Gentiles because they are: the chosen people of God from Genesis 12, guardians of God's special revelation - the Old Testament Scriptures, and that the Messiah himself came first as a Jew to the Jews. To the Gentiles he says, in essence, salvation is of the

Jews. You are not being saved by your Greek culture – or any other culture. You are being saved by a salvation that comes through the despised Semitic people called the Jews. Paul says to the Jews, your salvation is not your own. It is God's and he gives it to whom he pleases. He can raise up from stones – even Gentile stones! – children to Abraham. The whole point is that God is the One who has mercy. Ethnicity is not decisive here. There is no merit with him. We are all sinners.