

PAUL AND THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Romans 1:1-17

CONCERNING PAUL (1-5)

1. His place in life (v1)

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

Paul calls himself a bondservant. Once he was a slave to sin, when sin was his Master , but now he sees himself has a slave to Christ . He has yielded all his personal rights and freedom to Him.

Paul was called to be an apostle by the will of God . He didn't appoint himself. He was separated (set apart) from his mother's womb (Gal .1:15), to be God's apostle.

Apostle means " sent out" , and so he went forth to preach the Gospel of the good news of salvation to the Gentiles.

2. His story in life (vv2-4)

.....² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, 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.

Paul is carefully to root his message in the authority of God's word , by referring to the prophets of the O.T.

The gospel is the gospel concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord , who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Paul is revealing to the Romans, the double nature of Christ. As Son of God , he came from heaven and possessed an eternal divine nature , as man , he was of the lineage of the house of David, possessing human nature , like ours . He is the perfect, unique Godman . And He proved it by rising from the dead three days after his burial.

Jesus Christ our Lord is a compilation of Jesus , His earthy name , Christ (Messiah) the Anointed One of God , and Lord , Master of all.

3. His purpose in life (v5)

Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.

Paul sees Jesus Christ has the one who has enabled him by undeserved favor to be an apostle .

Paul's saw his gifting as that which would produce faith in the gospel that would result in obedience to the demands of the gospel.

CONCERNING THE ROMANS (6-15)

1. Paul's description of them (vv6-7)

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.

There are no biblical or historical records written during the 1st century that indicate who started this church in Rome. Acts 2:10 indicates that there were people from Rome in Jerusalem who heard Peter's evangelistic sermon on the day of Pentecost , and therefore some were converted and returned to proclaim Christ in Rome .

The believers in Rome are called beloved of God. So precious ! Paul placed at the core of a believer's understanding of God that God loved the sanctified church.

The believers in Rome saints (plural). That's important , because Paul is referring to all members of the church. We

are living saints , not dead saints . The Roman Catholic doctrine that supports canonization of miracle-working Catholics as saints after death is false .

2. Paul's report of them (v8)

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

Before Paul mentions his prayers for them , he praises God on their behalf.

Paul rejoices in the fact that the believers in Rome were distinguished throughout the entire Roman world for their faith in Christ. Some churches are famous because of their pastor, their architecture, their size, their wealth , but the first Roman church was famous because of its faith .

3. Paul's deep desire to visit them (vv9-10)

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.

Paul served God in spirit and truth . Serving with his spirit , meant serving with all his heart . Paul's ministry originated

in the empowering of God in his inner man , rather than the abilities and energies of his old nature .

Paul's prayer life was such that he did not forget the saints in Rome . They were never off his prayer list . God bared witness to his sincere love and concern for the Roman believers .

He prayed that it might be God's will to open a way for him them in Rome. That was the cry of his heart because he was hindered from achieving that on many occasions. But he was confident that it would be realized in God's time.

4. Paul's reason and eagerness to visit them (vv11-15)

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.

Paul lived with an ongoing recognition that God had given him gifts of the spirit that he had a moral responsibility to use them in serving as many as possible –that they may grow , until his ministry was completed .

The eventual meeting of the two would be mutual in edification . Paul would be a blessing to them, and they

would be a blessing to him. Paul never thought he was above being spiritually edified by other believers.

¹⁴ I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the 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.

Prior to his conversion, Paul like us all, held a debt of sin with God. Once freed from the debt of sin through faith in Christ's sacrifice as payment for sins, Paul found himself with a new kind of debt.

What was Paul's debt?

First, Paul felt spiritually indebted towards God because God had divinely saved him and on behalf of the Gentiles was appointed to preach the gospel to them. *Secondly*, he had a debt to the Roman believers directly, because of their spiritual need.

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

Paul was expressing his responsibility to the Greeks, who were wise, educated and cultured and to the Barbarians, who were unwise, uneducated, and uncultured. All non-Greeks were considered Barbarians, who spoke strangely,

and much of their languages sounded like gibberish , and were mimicked by saying , “ bar, bar, bar ,bar.”

Paul affirms that this new debt toward God is discharged through the witnessing the gospel of Jesus Christ .

God calls us to action . Jesus first says, “come to me ” , then he says “go.” Mark 5:19— Jesus said to the delivered demoniac of the Gadarenes. *Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.*

Over and over the believer is commanded to “go.” Go and do, go, and show, go and tell, go into the towns, go into the cities ,go out into the alleys, go into the back roads ,go into the country lanes . Go,go,go, compel them to come into God’s kingdom and his great feast.

Romans 10:15— *How beautiful the feet of those who bring good news. Are your feet consecrated?*

Paul’s states , *“I’m eager .”* Paul was zealous , ready, and willing to be bear witness of the good news of God’s love and forgiveness for sin. Paul also told the Romans ; I serve Christ wholeheartedly. He was driven by an unmatched passion for the lost. His heart broke and bled for souls.

Romans 9:2-3 – *I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and*

cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.

Would you be willing to give someone else your place in heaven and take his place in Hell- if that were possible? Paul was.

CONCERNING THE GOSPEL (16-17)

1. Its respectability (v16a)

Paul was not only willing, eager, and but also unashamed of the gospel.

Paul sought to convey to these believers that the message of the gospel was not to be seen as less glorious than the glory of Rome (with all its sophistication) at the height of its power and splendor . They were not to be intimidated though they followed Christ who was born in a barn , in an obscure province of Palestine , raised in the house of a poor carpenter and crucified as a criminal .

Jesus warned against the possibility of succumbing to shame regarding Him when he declared, "*For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels*" (Mark 8:38.)

2. Its nature (v16b-c)

The power to save a person from eternal damnation and the power of sin is in the gospel. It's not in the power of the messenger but in the power contained in the message –the living word –that transforms a person's life.

The Greek word for power is "dynamis" from it we get the English word dynamite. The Romans took pride in their military power. Paul took pride in the power of God. The dynamite of men is unto *destruction*. The dynamite of God is unto *deliverance*. It has the power to blast out the sin out of the most hardened sinners.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that *" the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God "* (1 Cor.1 :18), and *" we preach Christ and Him crucified , to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness , but to those who are called, both Jews and Gentiles , Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God "* (1 Cor.1:23).

3. Its scope (v16d)

The gospel is for the salvation of everyone who believes . The gospel in a nutshell is found in John 3:16 –*God so*

loved the world , that He gave His one and only begotten Son , that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life . Eternal life is what the gospel offers to sinners . Through Christ alone men can be saved from sin, Satan, from judgment , from wrath, and from spiritual death. At Pentecost Peter declared , “ *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved .*” There is no one who is beyond the gospel’s power to save.

4. Its content (v17)

Paul knew the value of the gospel , for in it is revealed a righteousness from God (v 17) . In our natural state we are corrupted by sin and are rebellious against God. To be saved from His holy wrath we need a righteousness that is of God’s own nature.

This a righteousness that has to do with faith . It has nothing to do with our own works of righteousness. Believing in Jesus Christ , accepting Him as Lord and Savior of our lives justifies us before God, acquitting us of our crimes before his throne-room . By faith we are declared righteous , as if we never sinned once.

Our Christian life begins with faith and is lived out in faith and will terminate in faith . Verse 17 , says , *“ from faith to faith , the just (righteous) shall live by faith .”*

Paul was sent by the risen Christ to the nations , he was indebted , eager and unashamed to preach the gospel . Jesus tells us in John 20:21—*“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

God’s saving invitation goes out to all. John 1:12, *“ To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God.* Romans 10 : 9-10, *“ That if you confess with your mouth , “ Jesus as Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead , you will be saved .* What amazing promises !