

## Series – Romans: The Life of Faith. The Power of Grace

### “The Gospel – The Power of God” Rom. 1:1-17

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“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 7b). Hard to believe it’s the end of May – some children out of school, others soon will be – **summer vacation...**

So, I thought we would have a summer vacation as well and that we would all spend our summer in Rome! Well, we aren’t actually going to go there, but we are going to be spending most of our summer with the people of Rome as we work our way through the letter to the Romans over this summer.

As we begin this journey, I am excited to see what the Lord is going to do in our church, both in the lives of us as individuals and as the body of Christ. This is a book of the Bible that has had some profound impact upon the lives of great men of faith throughout history. This is the book that Martin Luther called the “chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel.” He wrote a commentary on the letter to the Romans and it was his reading and understanding of Romans 3 that changed him & the church.

**Confirmation and/or a new member class...**

So this morning, we are going to jump right in as we turn to Romans 1:1-17.

- 1) Written by Paul, a Servant of Christ Jesus, set apart for the Gospel (v. 1)
- 2) Written to Romans, those loved by God, called to be Saints (v. 7)
- 3) The Gospel is the power of God to live life eternally (v. 16)
- 4) The Gospel is the power of God to live life righteously (v. 17)

Ok, we are going to start by looking at a little background of this letter and of the author in particular. We find out off the bat this letter was written by Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, set apart for the Gospel. Now when we think of Paul, many often think of a great missionary and man of God and that is true. However, Paul was not always a great man of God. In Acts 7 we hear that his name was Saul and he was persecuting Christians. In fact, he gave his approval to the death of Stephen, one of the first deacons of the church in Jerusalem.

What happened? What happened is he met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus as he was going to persecute more Christians, and he came into a relationship with Christ and Jesus removed him from the road he was on that led to hell and put him on the road to heaven. It was through this encounter with Christ that Paul was changed. He was changed from persecuting those who believed in Christ to proclaiming the gospel so that everyone might believe in Christ. God powerfully transformed Paul and He wants to powerfully transform you and me.

And Paul introduces the topic he is going to be talking about right away, the gospel of God as he calls it in verse 1 and the gospel of his Son, as he says in verse 9. This gospel, this good news that the Messiah, the Christ, is coming to bring salvation has been prophesied throughout the Old Testament. From Genesis (3), to the Psalms (22) and Isaiah (53), all the way to Malachi (3:1), the last book of the Old Testament. The Father has been preparing to do this since the very beginning, and Paul begins with that reminder, which is especially for the Jews in Rome who are hearing this letter.

So, Paul starts, just as most letters from this time period, telling who he is and then he moves on to whom it is being written to. In verse 7, we find that this letter is being written to Romans, those loved by God, and called to be Saints. He is writing to the Roman Church.

He tells them they are loved by God and he says they are called to be saints. If you are a Christian, if you

have received Christ as your Savior, the Bible calls you a saint. You don't need to be dead to become a saint and you don't have to do two miracles or even one. You just need to put your faith in Christ and receive Him as your Savior, and you too can be a saint. So, in these opening introductory verses, Paul introduces himself and his credentials, and informs us who he is writing to and who they are in Christ.

Now in the last 2 verses of this passage, Paul gives us the theme of the entire rest of his letter to the Romans. I'll read them again and I would urge you to commit this to memory because I believe it will help you live out the gospel and God's power in your life. **Read Romans 1:16-17...**

Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation. The Gospel is the power of God to live life eternally. I believe that most of us here believe the truth of that statement in our heads. But I think we struggle with that belief being lived out in our life.

Because we know the power and pull of sin in our lives – challenge – doubt – rebellion. There is a judgment for sin in this world and in your life. Each of us will face this judgment. You have this life that you are living to make plans for your eternity, because when you leave this life, you enter your eternity.

This is why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel and preaching it and speaking it to those he comes in contact with. He knows that the gospel is the only hope of eternal life for everyone who believes. And this is important. It is for everyone who believes. This is why it is so important for people to be sharing the gospel with others.

Do we really believe that the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who believe? Do we believe that it is only through Christ that salvation is possible? That is what Christianity teaches. Jesus said "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." God loved people so much that he made the way through Christ. That is the good news, the gospel. We now have a hope for eternal life where there was none before. Do not be ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.

But it is not only the power of God for eternal life. The Gospel is the power of God to live life righteously. (v. 17) We are unable in ourselves to live righteously in this life. We are powerless. We are slaves to sin. But through trusting in Christ, through the good news of Jesus Christ, we are given the power of God to live righteously. This is not accomplished by trying harder or living by the law, or not going to see certain movies or giving money or even serving others. This righteousness is received by faith, not as a one-time act, but as a day in and day out faith.

Yes the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God for salvation of all who believe. When we truly come to a point of recognizing our sin and our need for a Savior, and that Jesus is that Savior, and we put our faith in Him, trusting that He is God in the flesh and died for us and resurrected from the dead, we receive by God's power, to live life eternally. We don't need to do that over and over to truly have eternal life.

But as we live in the light of the gospel, day in and day out recognizing what has truly been done for us, that Christ took my sin, my pride, my lies, my stealing, my dishonoring of my parents, my impure thoughts and motives, all the fullness of my sin and unrighteousness, and put it on Himself and instead gave me His righteousness, we can experience living the righteous life that we are called to by faith. It is by faith we live this. As we trust in Him and believe in Him and walk in the Spirit each day, the gospel continues to affect us and empower us to live righteously for His glory.

I think this is where many people struggle. We come and believe, but we fail to live our daily lives in the faith that the Gospel reveals, that Christ died not only to save us, but to empower us to live for Him. Paul expounds on this righteousness that is by faith throughout Romans and in many of his other letters.

The Gospel is the power of God to live righteously and in the fullness of life that Christ has come to give. This righteous life we live also helps us when we share the gospel with others, because they will be able to see our lives and the power of God at work in our lives to live out the gospel by faith. The gospel is the power of God to live life eternally and righteously. Do you believe that?

I want to challenge you this week with 2 things. First, think of someone you know whom you care about that you have not shared the gospel with. Pray for that person. Pray for their life, their job, and for their heart to be softened to hear and respond to the gospel. While you are praying, I also want you to live in the power of God by meditating on the gospel and what Christ did for you.

Then over the course of this month, I want you to look for an opportunity to invite this friend to church and share the gospel with them. This is their only hope of eternal life, their only hope of living a righteous life. You may be the one that God has sent into their life to share with them the gospel, the power of God to live. Seize that moment and do not be ashamed. In Jesus. Amen.