

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEB 27TH - 28TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

A LITTLE ABOUT THE APOSTLE

- He was Jewish-born, but had Roman citizenship.
- He was highly educated and formerly a Pharisee. He was dramatically converted in 35 A.D. on a road to Damascus.
- It is impossible to fully understand the power of Paul's work without knowing about his transformation.
- Was the primary minister to non-Jews. Under Paul both Jewish and non-Jewish people that believed in Jesus would be called the ekklesia, the church.
- Imprisoned in 67 A.D. during Nero's reign and executed in 68 A.D.
- Understanding Rome at this time is also very important.

THE SETTING OF ROMANS

- The Book of Romans was probably written around 57 A.D. in a time when the Roman Empire was extremely powerful and hedonistic.
- It is important to note how strikingly similar the culture and structure of Rome is to the United States today.
- This was Paul's 3rd missionary journey, and it would be his last.

THE RECIPIENTS OF ROMANS

- The church in Rome probably began with newly converted Jews present at Pentecost (Acts 2), but over the 20 or so years it existed it would have grown to be a very diverse group.
- The Roman church would've looked a lot like our church, a mixture of young and mature Christians and many curious non-believers.

THE PURPOSE OF ROMANS

- The church in Rome was on the edge of the Christian movement at this time. It was also situated in the most powerful city in the world.
- In a time when persecution was ramping up and Christians were greatly outnumbered, Paul wrote to the Roman church to tell them to live by faith. This is one of the largest themes of this book.

THE PURPOSE OF ROMANS

- Paul wanted to teach solid theology, equip Christians to share their faith and live it out in a pagan society, and to unite Christians by teaching the major doctrines of the faith.
- Paul wanted our faith to remain strong despite the environment. Romans not only tells us what to do, but begs the question of "why?"

GREETINGS (ROMANS 1:1-7)

A LENGTHY INTRODUCTION

Paul opens up with 6 verses telling the church in Rome who he was because they didn't really know him. Paul wanted them to know that he was a courier of the gospel of Jesus and an apostle that had seen Him firsthand.

- Paul was to the Romans what Jesus was initially to him, a messenger of the truth. Paul was also once like them: lost.

PAUL WAS ALSO A SERVANT

Many historians believe that Rome had more people in slavery than free, and the use of the terminology of being a willing servant probably resonated with most people.

- Not only was he a willing servant, but **he had been "set apart" by Jesus to advance the truth.** Paul models through this book that **we're all called to this.**

"THE GOSPEL OF GOD"

Paul mentions the gospel 10 different times in the letter to the Romans. This is important to us today because the Bible is so neglected by modern Christianity.

- **The "good news" of Jesus is found in the entire Word. Without this anchor we run wild and aimless and the result of an anchorless people is destruction.**

IT IS ALL CONNECTED

Paul encourages the Romans to accept the true gospel that was promised by the "prophets in the Holy Scriptures," the Old Testament.

- Paul wanted them to know that **Jesus has always existed and His message had been set up by the prophets and authors of the OT.** Even the death and resurrection had been foretold, giving it validity.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE CRUX OF THIS LETTER

V5-6 really encapsulates the mission of Paul and what he hoped to accomplish in Rome. Paul wanted to highlight the grace we receive from God that should lead us to live in obedience to His teachings.

- **All people have access to God and His love and mercy. As recipients of that, we should live in submission to Him.**

"TO ALL WHO ARE IN ROME..."

Paul transitioned from who he was to who his recipients were. These were both Jews and Gentiles in the most powerful and hedonistic city in the world.

- They were also potential partners in spreading the gospel further. Paul wanted to use Rome as a launching pad to Spain and beyond.

"...CALLED AS SAINTS"

The audience would've been believers. Paul calls them "saints," not because they were perfect, but because they were called to live in holiness just like Paul because they had accepted Jesus.

- **Regardless of how we view ourselves, Christians are called to live more and more like Jesus as time passes.**

A LONGING (ROMANS 1:8-15)

OBVIOUSLY THIS CHURCH HAD FAITH

Paul thanked God for the Roman church because "the news of [their] faith [was] being reported in all the world." What made their faith even more impressive was the city in which the community was placed.

- This should encourage us in the middle of the culture we live in. **Regardless of its environment, the church can flourish!**

IT MAKES ME WONDER ABOUT OUR REPUTATION

The church should do everything it can to have a good reputation to other Christians and even non-Christians. This is also true for Christians individuals. What is our personal and collective reputation?

- Even if we do our best, because we live amongst opposition, **there will always be hostility towards Christianity.**

"I WANT VERY MUCH TO SEE YOU"

Paul wanted to visit the flourishing church and also "impart...some spiritual gift to strengthen" them. He also wanted to be "mutually encouraged" by the Romans.

- Paul had not planted this church, so he wanted to help them grow while they also helped him. The church should function in this "iron sharpening iron" manner.

USING THE GIFTS OF GOD TO MINISTER

Paul's gift that he wanted to "impart" was the Gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor.12) that God had given him. We cannot give the Gifts, but we can use them to edify the church and bless others.

- **Though we can't give the Gifts, we can educate other Christians on them and use them to do God's work.** We must trust that God dispenses these as He sees fit.

WHY IS PAUL SO EAGER TO TEACH THEM?

Paul mentions that he is "obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish" to preach the gospel. Paul feels obligated because of the gracious salvation he received from Jesus.

- **Do we feel a sense of gratitude and duty to the One that saved us? Have we become apathetic? Entitled?**

BY FAITH (ROMANS 1:16-17)

"FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL"

The underlining theme of Romans is the power of Jesus' message. Paul knew that freedom and the blessings of God reside in the gospel, so he spends the rest of Romans explaining it.

- Paul, like us, was afraid at times of the pushback to his faith. But, **we cannot be ashamed of the gospel because without it there is no hope of salvation.**

SO, THE GOSPEL IS THE SOLUTION

Paul is presenting a paradigm for life to the Romans and to all Christians today: nothing will display the goodness of God, change hearts and minds, and save souls except for the gospel of Jesus found in the Bible.

- Simply look at the fruit: **the further we move from God's Word the more chaotic we become.**

"...FROM FAITH TO FAITH"

This pithy phrase indicates that deep, life-changing faith begins with a simple faith that God loves us and wants the best for us.

- **When we completely submit our lives to Jesus we grow exponentially because we have trusted God with everything. When we trust and obey God, our faith evolves and He changes us!**

"THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH"

- Righteousness is living a life that is ethical and moral according to the Bible. People that truly follow Jesus and the Word will be people that also "live by faith."
- We often hear about faith, but do we really understand what it means to have true faith?

"THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH"

- A saving faith is belief in, trust in, obedience to, and reliance on Jesus Christ.
- This begins with us knowing Who Jesus is and is followed by complete submission to Him, His commands, and His principles.

DO WE LIVE BY FAITH?

- Do we believe in and have a relationship with the biblical Jesus?
- Do we trust Jesus with every facet of our lives? Do we rely on Him for what we need?
- Do we obey His commands, knowing that He is the authority on morality?
- Do we believe there are rewards and consequences for how we live?