

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —

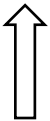
Lesson One

Romans 1:1-17

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...
Romans 1:16a*

Day 1

Pray: Psalm 119:18



Father, Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction.

Read: Romans 1:1-17

Observe:

- Write key words and themes, repeated words or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

Day 2- Romans 1:1-2

1. How does Paul identify himself in verse 1?
 - a. What are the implications of being a servant or a slave? Would others identify you as a servant or slave of Jesus?

Scholar's Note: *Servant* is *doulos* in Greek, literally translated as *slave*.

Apostle- *Sent one.* "The distinctive qualifications of the apostles were that they were directly and personally called and commissioned by Jesus, that they were eyewitnesses of the historical Jesus, at least (and especially) of his resurrection, and that they were sent out by him to preach with his authority."¹

For Discussion:

In what ways is it a contrast to be a servant and an apostle? How is this contrast at the heart of the Christian life?

2. What is Paul set apart for according to verse 1?

Digging Deeper

From what you learn about Paul from the following verses in Galatians and Acts, what does it mean that Paul was set apart for the gospel?

Galatians 1:15-16a *But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...*

Acts 26:13-18 *About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will. ¹⁵ "Who are you, lord?' I asked. "And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. ¹⁶ Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. ¹⁷ And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.'* (NLT)

*Paul is the Greek form of the name Saul, which is Hebrew. Even though he was Jewish he was known as Paul because he was sent to the Gentile or Greek people. Paul became all things to all people in order to win them to the gospel. (1 Cor. 9:22-23)

Gospel- *Good news.* Gospel—*euangeloi* is literally "good herald." It is an announcement or declaration of good news about what has been done.²

3. What does Paul say in verse 2 that shows us the gospel was not new with Paul?



We learn in these first verses that Paul was called by God to proclaim God's good news. He did not appoint himself. He did not create the message, nor did he spin it to make it more acceptable. This good news originated with God from eternity past and was hinted at throughout the Old Testament by God's spokesmen. It was not new when Paul proclaimed it, but it was unveiled in all the deity and humanity of Jesus.

- ◆ As we begin our study into the rich and deep truths of Romans pray for God to soften your heart toward his words. Some of these truths might be hard to understand or accept, so pray for the desire to be shaped by God's word (instead of wanting to shape God's word into your preference), for humility to embrace the mysteries of God and for diligence to keep digging deeply into God's word in order to see him better and love him more.

- ◆ Since Paul was an apostle—one sent from Jesus to bear his message—what implications does this have for us as we read it?

Day 3- Romans 1:3-4

1. In verses 3 and 4 we begin to see what, or rather who, this good news is that Paul is proclaiming. What do we learn about Jesus in verse 3?

Scholar's Note: "Flesh" can hint at human sinfulness (Rom. 8:4-5), but it often suggests [as in this case] mere humanity, especially in its physicality.³

Incarnation- *Becoming flesh*. "The doctrine of the Incarnation teaches that the eternal Son of God became human, and that he did so without in any manner or degree diminishing his divine nature."⁴

2. What did Jesus' resurrection from the dead declare to the world about him according to verse 4?


Picture and Ponder

"... the resurrection is the turning point in the existence of the Son of God. [In his incarnation] he was the Son of God in weakness and lowliness. Through the resurrection he becomes the Son of God in power."⁵

Digging Deeper

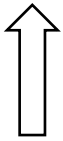
We learn in Romans 1:4 that Jesus' resurrection declared to the world that Jesus was the Son of God. What else did Jesus' resurrection result in according to the following verses in Ephesians?

Ephesians 1:19-22 **19** *I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power **20** that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. **21** Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. **22** God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. (NLT)*

 It is only as God that Jesus could live a perfect life and overcome death to live again. It is only as a human being that Jesus could identify with us and become our substitute. Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, paid the penalty that was due for our sin and God accepted his sacrifice and raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand—the place of honor and power. Ruling from heaven, Jesus poured out the promised Holy Spirit on his followers (Acts 2:33), not leaving us alone but with a Helper and Comforter as he promised.

- ◆ What does it mean for your life that Jesus left heaven and became a human being? (See Heb.4:15-16)

- ◆ What does it mean for your life that Jesus is on the throne, ruling and reigning over this world?



Jesus you are a wonderful savior! You are the powerful Son of God who conquered death and reigns now over everything and everyone. You are also still now, a human being who can understand and know my frailty and temptations, who is gentle and lowly, full of grace and truth, who loves and forgives me.

Day 4- Romans 1:5-7

1. Write out verse 5. Jesus Christ our Lord,

2. In verse 5 Paul tells us the purpose of his calling and apostleship. What is it?

Digging Deeper

Read the following verses to help us understand the relationship between obedience and faith.

- What is obedience without faith according to the following verses?

Romans 9:31-32 ³¹ ... but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? Because they did not

pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone.

- What is faith without obedience according to the following verses?

James 2:14, 17 ¹⁴ *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

For Discussion

How is sharing the gospel for **the sake of his name**? For whose sake do we generally focus on when we are sharing the gospel? Why is the shift in emphasis important?

Picture and Ponder

We never grasp the gospel until we understand that it is not fundamentally a message about our lives, dreams, or hopes. The gospel speaks about, and transforms, all of those things, but only because it isn't about us. It is a declaration about God's Son, the man Jesus. ⁶

3. What three ways does Paul identify the believers reading his letter in verses 6 and 7?

Saints- "a common way of referring to the new covenant people of God in the early church, but it was particularly favored by Paul."⁷ It refers to believers, all God's people, they are holy ones—those who are set apart by God and for God.



Identity is such a hot topic today. Paul addressed it two thousand years ago, so maybe it's an issue that has always been prevalent in culture. And no wonder. We all want to know who we really are, where we belong, and what our place and purpose is in this life.

- ◆ Paul tells the believers that they are called to belong to Jesus. How does that impact you—that if you have trusted Jesus as your Savior and King—you *belong* to him? What are the implications of *belonging*?

- ◆ He also tells the believers that they are loved by God. If this is your identity—that you are beloved by the King of the universe—how should this affect your relationships with others? How does it affect the way you view your difficult circumstances?

- ◆ Lastly Paul tells them they are called to be saints. This speaks to purpose. How does the fact that you are set apart by God for his purposes give you identity? Do you live out of this identity?

Day 5- Romans 1:8-17

1. Paul has never been to the church in Rome. Why does he want to see them according to verse 11?
 - a. What does it teach us, that Paul also wants encouragement from the believers in Rome (v.12)?

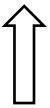
- b. In verse 5, we saw that the priority for sharing the gospel was for the sake of his name. What other purpose is implied in verses 13 and 14 for sharing the gospel?

For Discussion

In verse 15, Paul says that he is eager to preach the gospel to the believers in Rome. Why do believers still need to hear the gospel preached?

Picture and Ponder

"...the more it [the gospel] is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."⁸



Father, help me never to grow tired of hearing your good news. Work in my heart, renew my spirit each day that your gospel will grow sweeter and sweeter to me.

2. In six short words in verse 16 Paul tells what the gospel is. Write those six words.

- a. Reflect on the impact of each of these words and write your thoughts:

The **power** of God for salvation-

The power of **God** for salvation-

The power of God for **salvation**-

b. Who is the gospel for according to verse 16?

Scholar's Note: The word *believe* (v16) in Greek is *pisteuo* and can be translated: *to have faith in, to trust*.

For Discussion

In verse 16, the word *ashamed* can also be translated *offended*. What is offensive about the gospel? How are you ever ashamed of the gospel?



Tim Keller helps us understand: "the message of the gospel is what God has done and will do for us. Paul says that the gospel is therefore a power. He doesn't say it brings power or has power, but that it actually is power. The gospel message is actually the power of God in verbal, cognitive form. It lifts people up; it transforms and changes things. When it is outlined and explained, or reflected upon, its power is released."⁹

◆ When we understand that when we share the gospel—the good news of Jesus—it is more than just mere words—it is the power of God—how will this change our attitudes and our eagerness to share this good news?

◆ How can really believing this verse help us not to be ashamed of the gospel?

Righteousness- "Is a positional word—it means to have a good or right standing."¹⁰ "It is the provision of a right relationship with God through [faith in] the saving work of Jesus."¹¹

God's righteousness- "is his inflexible steadfastness in doing what is right, acting according to his character, and fulfilling his righteous purposes and promises."¹²

Digging Deeper

Paul tells us in verse 17, that the gospel reveals a righteousness given by God. This is Paul's thesis statement, and he will spend the next seven chapters fleshing it out, and with God's help we will grow in our understanding of all its dimensions. To begin, read the following verses. How is this righteous status, given freely by God, made possible for us?

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For our sake he made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God.*

1 Corinthians 1:30 ³⁰ *But it is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became God-given wisdom for us—our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption...(HCSB)*

For Discussion

Why is being given righteousness so much more than only being forgiven?

3. Paul sums up verse 17 by quoting Habakkuk 2:4. What does he say is necessary for receiving righteousness and living righteously?



The righteous shall live by faith describes how the gospel gives life initially and it describes how the righteous live their lives as people of God. What other words could you insert in place of *faith* that describe how you sometimes try to live instead of living by faith?

Picture and Ponder

"Those who are righteous by faith also live by faith. Having begun in faith, they continue in the same path."¹³

One Thing:

What is one thing from this week's study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

¹ Stott, John R.W. The Message of Romans. P. 46. Intersity Press USA

² Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 12). Kindle Edition

³ Doriani, Daniel M.. Romans (p. 41). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Douglas, J.D. Revising Editor and Tenney, Merrill C. General Editor. New International Bible Dictionary. P. 465. Zondervan 1987

⁵ Nygren, p.51 as quoted in Stott, John R.W. The Message of Romans. P. 50. Intersity Press USA 19914

⁶ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (pp. 12-13). Kindle Edition.

⁷ Zondervan,. Ephesians (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 10) (p. 86). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁸ Luther, Martin

⁹ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 19). Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 21). Kindle Edition.

¹¹ Douglas, J.D. Revising Editor and Tenney, Merrill C. General Editor. New International Bible Dictionary. P. 465. Zondervan 1987

¹² Alec Motyer

¹³ Stott, John R.W. The Message of Romans. P. 65. Intersity Press USA