

Series through Romans: TRUTH: UNASHAMED, PART I

Sermon Title: Week 1, Welcome to Rome!

Principal Scripture: Romans 1:1-17

Date: June 3, 2018

† **Welcome to Rome!**

- **Today we begin our journey through the book of ROMANS. NO SMALL UNDERTAKING... SCRIPTURE invites us to embrace this challenge with a sincere desire to hear, grow, receive, and be blessed by God's Revelation of HIMSELF in this amazing book.**
- **RESOURCES! You won't remember everything I teach- to make this your own, you have to engage...**
 - **First Tracks - These message notes- BIBLE!**
 - **Reflection Questions Extra readings**
- **So.. LETS JUMP IN!**

† **Why Romans matters so much**

- **It's been described as the greatest work of Christian teaching in the Bible. It doesn't so much contain teaching that isn't found elsewhere, but it is comprehensive in scope and the way that the Spirit led Paul to lay out, like a lawyer making a case, the majestic message of Salvation by Grace, thru Faith**
- **In history of church, through Romans that God worked to bring the full Truth of the Gospel to Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley**

Themes of the book

- The verdict of **SIN**- **Where we begin next week**
3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

- The provision of **SALVATION**
24 *and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

- The way of **GRACE**- **CENTRAL THEME!**
5:1-2 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

- The reality of God's **SOVEREIGNTY**
- The result of **HOW WE THEN SHALL LIVE**

- **In these themes, ROMANS lays out the great, central doctrines of Faith in Christ. BUT IN IT'S ESSENCE...**

In its essence, Romans is a book about GOD!

- **"God" appears 153 times in Romans, every 46 words. With exception of very short 1 Peter/1 John, more than any other NT book. By far most common theme in Romans itself.**
- **IN ROMANS, GOD IS AT THE CENTER. Corrective for us, because increasingly, even in Christian culture, WE ARE at center. We look to God as our creator, we worship, but when it comes down to it, we see God as someone we call upon to make our life better, on our terms. ROMANS PROCLAIMS that we scarcely imagine God's love of us, goodness to us, but life is NOT CENTERED ON US! Centered in God.**

† **Context: Paul...** Author of Book.. lets talk about him

- **Wrote CE 57. About 24 years after DBR of Jesus. Paul had been missionary for 20 years at this point.**

- Paul took three major missionary journeys prior to going to Rome. On second journey he established church in CORINTH. LATER, at end of his THIRD missionary journey, Paul was run out of Ephesus by a riot, he went to Greece for three months, to rest, before returning to Jerusalem. Much of these three months were spent in Corinth, and it is here that he wrote Romans.
- NOTE- Opening of Romans makes clear that Paul greatly desired to go to Rome himself. Shortly after his trip to Jerusalem, Paul was arrested, and being a Roman Citizen, he appealed his case to Caesar. In acts 25, the Roman Governor Festus said “You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you will go!” And so, Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner in CE 59.

† Context: Rome

- Rome was the capital of Roman empire, most influential city in known world. We think of Rome as Secular, but actually very religious. Roman religion very superstitious and had many pagan gods- in fact, because Jews and Christians rejected all these Gods, (only one), the Romans considered them atheists.
- CHURCH IN ROME was likely a network of house churches, didn't have single central leadership.
- Most likely started by Jews who had traveled from Rome to Jerusalem for celebration of Pentecost, became believers as church was born in Jerusalem, and then brought Gospel back to Rome, where they shared with other Jews and gentile romans
- BY TIME PAUL WROTE, Roman church had existed for over 20 years, was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. While Paul writes about the strength and faith of the Roman church, it is unlikely that these believers had ever been visited by one of the apostles, they likely had no early NT writings, so their faith in Christ was based solely in the evidence of the Jewish scriptures, EVENT OF THE RESURRECTION and the very simple Gospel message they had heard in Jerusalem.
- KEY! It was Paul's intention to soon travel to Rome, and he wanted to write to them about the essential TRUTH of the gospel that he taught. SO- AUDIENCE PAUL HAS IN MIND WHEN HE WRITES: Growing church, very simple understanding of Gospel. Highly DIVERSE church, wide variety of beliefs and backgrounds coming in, surrounded by an extremely pagan culture that was already viewing the Christians with suspicion, on the cusp of Nero's persecution.
- HERE'S WHY THIS MATTERS TO US! In several key ways, in spite of all of our Christian culture, WE ARE LIKE THE ROMANS. For many believers in our culture we have a very simple understanding of the Gospel (misunderstandings), very diverse, lots of backgrounds, beliefs, traditions, and we are surrounding by a highly secular culture that increasingly views us with suspicion, with hints of persecution on the horizon. Environment where it is easy to feel pressured, to be confused about essential question of WHAT IS TRUTH!!
- INTO THIS DYNAMIC the Holy Spirit led Paul to write and proclaim the miraculous, essential message of Faith in Christ that we have in this letter.

† And so it begins- Read 1-7. Listen for recurring Words!

NIV- Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, **called** to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of **God**—² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures³ regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David,⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of **God** in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

NASB: “⁴who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

⁵Through him we received grace and apostleship to **call** all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake. ⁶And you also are among those Gentiles who are **called** to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷To all in Rome who are loved by **God** and **called** to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from **God** our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Word ‘GOD’... God is at the center here... and in relationship to us, the concept of being CALLED.**

A matter of **CALLING**: 1:1-7

- **Paul is CALLED to be an apostle, set apart**
- **Paul is CALLING gentiles to the OBEDIENCE of faith**
- **We are CALLED to belong to Jesus**
- **CALLED to be His holy (set apart) People.**
- **As people of faith, to be CALLED means that GOD is taking the initiative in our lives. HE comes to us, saying I HAVE A PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE! To follow me, by faith, into obedience. To belong to me, to be set apart for a relationship with me! QUESTION! WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CALL**

A matter of **LONGING**: 1:8-15

⁸First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. ⁹God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

¹¹I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—¹²that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. ¹³I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. ¹⁴I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

- **Focus of Paul’s prayer life? For how God will use him to share ‘spiritual gift’, to encourage them, to strengthen their faith with full truth of Gospel**
- **Eager to preach Gospel: Paul’s heart- great desire- is for these young believers to know the fullness of faith in Christ**
- **What is OUR LONGING? FIRST PLACE PASSION?**

The thesis: How what is solely **GOD’S** may become fully **YOURS**. 1:16-17

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who **believes**: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

- **In the Gospel we find the power of God for **SALVATION**.**

- **Worldview! WE ARE LOST APART FROM GOD!**

- **This Salvation from the Gospel is received through **BELIEF**.**

- **Worldview! Salvation is not by our effort! Cannot be achieved, only received. FAITH! GOOD NEWS!**

The Gospel is the **REVELATION** of God’s **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

- **HERE'S THE DEAL-** *In virtually every world religion, for the totality of the OT, and for many through history of Christianity, God's righteousness was NOT GOOD NEWS. Something to be feared, because GOD IS RIGHTEOUS, and WE ARE NOT. Therefore we are separated from God, and if God is JUST, then we are necessarily under judgment.*
- **BUT IN THE GOSPEL- GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS-** *perfection- is clearly and perfectly seen in the CROSS. As Paul wrote in Romans 9...*

^{9:22} *What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?*

- **BECAUSE OF THE CROSS, THE GOSPEL...**

- God's Righteousness is received, and experienced, by FAITH.

- **Wrestling with this idea of the Righteousness of God, that is received by faith, Martin Luther wrote this in his memoirs...**

I hated that word "righteousness of God," which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they call it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner. Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience... I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience.

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, '*He who through faith is righteous shall live.*'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. **And this is the meaning:** the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "*He who through faith is righteous shall live.*"

Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scripture from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as the work of God, that is what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise.

- **Church, this is the invitation of Romans. The paradise, not just of heaven when we die, but TODAY-** *allowing the Spirit to use this truth to lift off of us the chains of a performance based relationship with God- and with the world- where we never measure up.*
- **If you have never truly heard the good news of the gospel, Jesus is calling you to come, believe, and receive forgiveness and new life.**
- **And even for those of us who have, God is calling us to take this journey into the full truth of the Gospel, to be strengthened, to grow, and be blessed.**
- **FIRST STEP... Before our hearts can be set free, we MUST UNDERSTAND the chains that bind us. This starts next week... the NECESSARY VERDICT of the reality of sin.**