

### I. Paul's introduction to Romans

A. Last Sunday, we looked at the first five verses of Paul's personal introduction. Today, we will finish his personal introduction and look at some of his general introduction, which will take us verse 17.

B. Romans 1:5-17 . . . through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, [6] among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; [7] to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [8] First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. [9] For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, [10] always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. [11] For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; [12] that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. [13] I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. [14] I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. [15] So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. [16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

C. Prayer

### II. Paul's personal introduction continued

A. Romans 1:6 . . . among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; [7] to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. In keeping with my commitment to acknowledge God's seamless use of language that infers His sovereign actions and our free will in

relation to salvation, as well as other areas of the Christian life, we will begin today by looking at the word “called” which appears three times in the first six verses.

- a. And beyond these first six verses, the word “called” appears one more time in Romans, and the words “chosen” and “elect” – which are from the same Greek root word as called – each appear once.
  - b. The first time Paul uses the word “called,” he is referring to his own calling by Jesus Christ to be an apostle (Romans 1:1).
  - c. In verse 6, Paul speaks of the Roman Gentile believers as the “called of Jesus Christ,” and based on Paul’s words in Romans 8:30 . . . “and these whom He called, He also justified” it seems obvious that he is referring to their salvation and reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ.
  - d. Then in verse 7, Paul says these Christians are “called as saints.” The word “saints” can also be translated “holy ones.” When we match being “called as saints” with Paul’s words in Romans 8:29 . . . “For those whom [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,” we see that God not only calls us to eternal salvation, He also calls or predetermines that we are to live holy, Christ-like lives.
  - e. To sum up, in the first three uses of the word “called,” we have Paul being called to apostleship, unbelievers being called to salvation, and believers being called to holy living.
2. Returning to verse 7, Paul refers to these Gentile believers as “beloved of God.” This is a noteworthy statement, because even though God loves the whole world (John 3:16), and even though God seeks the good of all humanity by making the sun shine and rain fall on the righteous and unrighteous alike (Matthew 5:45), yet God’s children – those who are His own – are beloved. And to be beloved means you are greatly loved and dear to God’s heart.
- a. An earthly example of this is as follows: you are to love your neighbor and seek your neighbor’s good in all things. But when it comes to your spouse and your children – your love and care and protection and provision and interaction with them is greater and far more intimate than with your neighbors. Why? Because your family members are dear to your heart.
  - b. So it is with God and us. He is our loving Father and we are His beloved children. Jesus Christ is our loving Husband and we are His beloved bride. Therefore, the love God pours out on us is far greater and far more intimate than the love He pours out on the

unbelieving world. We see this truth spoken of in a very practical way in Romans 8:28-39 which ends with the reminder that nothing is able to separate us from the love God has for us, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Paul concludes his personal introduction with a blessing: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - a. The word “grace” specifically means favor, and when used in relation to God’s favor toward us, it speaks of His mercy and forgiveness in the face of His justice, His kindness in assisting and empowering us in the face of our need to grow in holiness, His comfort and protection in the face of trials, tribulation, and loss, and many other forms of undeserved favor and help.
  - b. The word “peace” when used in relation to the peace God gives, is first of all, peace with God. Why? Because peace with God is the source and substance of true and lasting peace.
    - (1) Now without question, we have peace with God because He has, first of all, made such a condition possible through Jesus Christ. But of equal importance is the fact that to have peace with God, we must stop rebelling and start trusting Him and His goodness, and start submitting to and obeying His will, and start being content with what He gives or allows.
    - (2) For example, when we have peace with God, God will either give us peace with our enemies, or He will give us inner peace in the midst of our enemies (*He prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies . . . Psalm 23:5*). Either way, we must either love our enemies if we are to preserve the peace God has given, or we must let go of anxiety, anger, resentment, and the desire to hurt those who are hurting us, if we are to experience the peace of God deep within.
    - (3) The point here is that the peace of God comes from God, but He gives it to those who trust in Him and obey Him, because they are the only ones who, believing they are safe in His hands, can experience His peace.
  - c. I want to add one more truth here, and that is that this kind of peace produces a quiet, yet exceedingly satisfying joy that turns James 1:2-4 from a command into a treasured truth to live by.

B. Romans 1:8-13 . . . A simple summary of verses 8-13 is that Paul is telling the Christian’s in Rome that their faith is well-spoken of far and wide, he has been praying for them, he intends to come and work among

them – for awhile, and he has wanted to come for some time but has been prevented for some unstated reason.

- C. Romans 1:14-15 . . . I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. [15] So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
1. The only point I want to say about these two verses is that at that time, the label “Greeks” referred to all civilized nations who followed the leading of the Greeks in such things as art, philosophy, science, medicine, education, and accumulating knowledge.
  2. The label “barbarians” referred to those people groups who were not civilized, but rather were tribal, uneducated, having no interest in philosophy, and lacking knowledge of historical religions and the current teachings of Christianity.
  3. Though the words wise and foolish seem to apply directly to the Greeks and the barbarians, it is possible that the wise represents those willing to hear about, consider, and even believe the truth of the gospel, whereas the foolish are those who think themselves too wise to consider the gospel believable – which would then include the well-educated Greeks.
- D. Romans 1:16-17 . . . For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."
1. For I am not ashamed of the gospel
    - a. Some of us, in certain situations or settings, might feel some embarrassment at being identified as a Christian – such as when we are bowing y our head, closing our eyes, and giving thanks for our meal at a busy restaurant. However, this is not the kind of embarrassment or shame Paul is speaking of in verse 16. And yet, sad to say, this kind of embarrassment or shame is a known problem among professing Christians.
    - b. Paul addressed the problem of public embarrassment over being identified as a Christian when he reminded Timothy that God had not given him a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. In other words, Paul was exhorting Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of Paul His prisoner, but rather to join Paul in boldly suffering for the gospel (2 Timothy 1:7-8).

- c. Jesus warned His followers of this kind of embarrassment or shame when he said, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).
    - d. However, when Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel, he is affirming that his boldness is because the gospel is everything it claims to be, and it does everything it claims to do. In other words, in spite of the fact that to the Jews the gospel was a stumbling block and to both the well-educated and uneducated Gentiles it was foolishness, Paul knew from personal experience that it was the power of God for a salvation that transforms and justifies.
  2. For it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes
    - a. This is a profound statement because the gospel is not just spoken or written words, the gospel is the word of God and therefore it is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It states the problem of sin and the penalty for sin. It convicts of sin. It makes known God’s gracious remedy for both the penalty and practice of sin. It reveals that Jesus Christ is God’s son and the believer’s redeemer. It declares that faith is required to receive God’s gracious gift of eternal life. And finally, those who speak it, those who hear it, and the gospel itself, are enlightened and aided and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
    - b. However, even though the gospel is the power of God for salvation, it is only powerful in the lives of those who believe. To those who do not believe, the gospel is little more than an empty religion, or one path among many leading to God, or foolishness, or even offensive.
  3. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith
    - a. Beyond the reasons I just gave you, the gospel is the power of God to save because it also reveals the righteousness of God.
    - b. The righteousness of God begins with His character and extends to His attributes (*personal righteousness*). It includes His justice (*judicial righteousness*), and is the foundation of His ways and means for justifying sinners through faith (*justifying righteousness*).

- (1) When we speak of God's personal righteousness, we are speaking of the righteousness found in His character and attributes. John points to God's perfect and complete righteousness when he says that "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).
  - (2) Concerning God's judicial righteousness, He so perfectly balances His anger and wrath toward sin and unrepentant sinners with His mercy and kindness toward repentant sinners that His justice is never compromised, never partial, or in any other way turned to injustice.
  - (3) And concerning God's plan to justify sinners through faith – and for NT believers it requires faith in Jesus Christ – Paul says that God is both just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26). This means that God maintains perfect justice even as He mercifully saves repentant sinners from the penalty and power of sin, forgives their sin, counts them righteous, and graciously gives them eternal life.
- c. My purpose in pointing out all three is because the righteousness of God revealed by the gospel includes His personal righteousness, His judicial righteousness, and His justifying righteousness.
- (1) Why all three? Because when God justifies repentant sinners, He gives them the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23), He warns them of a coming judgment where all – including believers – will be judged according to their deeds (Romans 2:6), He calls them to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29) and to live a holy life (Romans 6:13), and He makes them His beloved children who can call Him "Father" (Romans 1:7; 8:15).
  - (2) In other words, God's personal righteousness and His judicial righteousness are essential parts of His judicial righteousness.
- d. The words "from faith to faith" do not give us much to go on when discerning how they are to be understood. And as usual, given the complexity of Romans, there are various views among the commentators and Greek scholars.
- (1) However, the immediate context includes verses 16-17, which tell us that the gospel is the power of God for salvation and the righteous live by faith. If we bring into that context the fact that Christ's redeeming work covers those who lived by faith before He died and rose again AND those who live by faith after his death and resurrection, then we can conclude

that the righteous have been living by faith since Adam and Eve.

(2) Therefore, it seems reasonable to understand these words “from faith to faith” as being from the faith of the OT believers to the faith of NT believers. In other words, just as God has not changed, so God’s means and ways of being justified in the His sight has not changed even though faith in the presence and work of Jesus Christ has been added in the NT.

4. But the righteous man shall live by faith
  - a. This phrase can be understood in one of two ways, and I am recommending we take it both ways.
  - b. The first way to take this truth is that the righteous person is in this condition of righteousness because he has sincerely pursued holiness of life by the faith that includes confident trust in God, His character, and His word, along with a sincere devotion to obeying the will and word of God.
  - c. The second way to take this truth is that the righteous person, that is, the one who because he is living a life of faith toward God, is in good standing with God, and has been justified by God, and has been credited with righteousness so that in relation to the penalty of sin and eternal life, God deals with him as if he had never sinned. Therefore, in this second way, the righteous man lives forever because God has given him the gift of eternal life.
  - d. The reason to keep both truths together in regard to the righteous man living by faith is because justifying faith is made up of the inseparable qualities of confidence in God and in His plan of salvation ( *the redeeming work of Jesus Christ*), and obedience to the will and word of God as made clear to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. And justification is made up of Christ’s paid up sacrifice for sinner’s sin, God’s forgiveness, and God’s crediting righteousness to repentant sinner’s who seek to be justified by faith.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Do we believe that unrepentant sinners are eternally lost and their only remedy is the gospel in that it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes?
- B. Do we believe that righteousness is both a requirement and a result of being justified in the sight of God? If we do, may we live accordingly.