

I. The Messenger - Paul

V1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

- A. A bondservant... an apostle: Paul's self-identification is important. He is *first* a servant of Jesus Christ, and *second* called to be an apostle.
1. Bondservant:
 - a) Doulos: There were several ancient Greek words used to designate a slave, but the idea behind the word for *servant* (*doulos*) is "complete and utter devotion, not the abjectness which was the normal condition of the slave."
 - b) Servant of the Lord – This term was used regularly in the Old Testament for Moses, David, Joshua, etc (Josh 14:7, Ps 18:1) and by using this term for himself he is not only making a connection that Jesus is the same God of the Old Testament but he is associating himself up with all the old great prophets.
 2. Apostle: The idea of being an apostle is that you are a special ambassador or messenger.
 - a) Those that have seen the risen Lord
 - b) Apostles were sent out in to the world to be the mouthpiece of Jesus – they spoke for Him and bear His authority
 3. Separated to the gospel of God:
 - a) Separated: The word separated here is like being set apart as a tribute to God. (Ex 13:12). Also a link to the Old Testament and the first fruits that are set apart for God and devoted fully to God or sacrificed to God.
 - b) Gospel of God: Paul's message is the gospel (good news) of God.
 - (1) God is the author and owner of the message
 - (2) Paul is the messenger whom God has called and set apart to proclaim to people a message that comes from God himself

II. The Gospel

V2 – 6 [2] which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, [3] concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh [4] and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, [6] including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

- A. It is the gospel promised in the OT scriptures
1. Not new but a completion of something old – God's redemptive plan was promised in the Old Testament
- B. It is the gospel of God's Son– the gospel is about Jesus (birth, death, burial, resurrection)

1. Descended from David according to the flesh – Humiliation - God who became a man. His humanity was just as important as His divinity. He had to be human to save humans.
2. Declared to be the Son of God in power
 - a) Through the power of the resurrection, God announced to the world the sonship of Jesus. **Acts 17:30–31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."**
 - b) He is enthroned on high In glory and in power and sits at the right hand of God the Father. No one is more mighty, powerful or exalted than Him. He has conquered death and the greatest enemy and he sits in Heaven.
 - c) Jesus Christ, our Lord – "God's Son is Jesus, the Greek version of the Hebrew name Yeshua/Joshua----"God will save," the fulfiller of all God "promised beforehand" (v 2). He is Christ, the anointed man whom God has appointed to rule his people. And he is our Lord, God himself. The gospel is both a declaration of Jesus's perfect rule, and an invitation to come under that perfect rule, to make him "our Lord." (Keller)
3. The Purpose of the Gospel of God is the Obedience of Faith among All Nations (Moo, p38)
 - a) Faith, if genuine, always has obedience as its outcome
 - b) Obedience, if it is to please God, must always be accompanied by faith
 - c) Westminster Confession 14.2: By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acts differently upon that which each passage thereof contains; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

III. The Romans

V 7-15 [7] To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be 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 all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. [9] For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you [10] always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. [11] For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—[12] that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. [13] I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well 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 I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

A. Who does Paul say the Romans are?

1. Loved by God

a) This is not about our disposition towards God, but His disposition toward us

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.” Eph 2:1, 4-5

b) God does not love us because of our merits

“It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you.” Deut 7:7-8

2. Called - God's action to draw us to himself

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” John 6:44

3. Saints - comes from the Greek word hagios, which means “consecrated to God, holy, sacred, pious. The idea of the word “saints” is a group of people set apart for the Lord and His kingdom.

B. Why does Paul want to visit/write to Rome?

1. To thank them for their faith that is spoken of throughout the whole world. Because of its location, this church had a special visibility and opportunity to glorify Jesus throughout the Empire.

2. He has been praying for them - ***“For God is my witness”*** is Paul's vow to assure them that his desire to visit them was not casual. Perhaps it was an acknowledgment of how easy it is to say you will pray for someone, and then fail to do it. He wanted them to know that he really prayed.

3. To mutually encourage one another

4. To strengthen them - ***“These Christians had to be strong. “The Christians of Rome were unpopular – reputed to be ‘enemies of the human race’ and credited with such vices as incest and cannibalism. In large numbers, then, they became the victims of the imperial malevolence – and it is this persecution of Christians under Nero that traditionally forms the setting for Paul's martyrdom.” (Bruce p 25)***

5. Paul has an obligation to preach to the Greeks and barbarians, the wise and the foolish

a) Barbarians — a word that today often refers to uncivilized people or evil people and their evil deeds — originated in ancient Greece, and it initially only referred to people who were from out of town or did not speak Greek.

b) ***“Paul has been set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles, and he spends his life discharging that obligation. Ultimately, the debt Paul owes is owed to God and to Christ, but he transfers that indebtedness, that obligation, to the people who need to hear the gospel.” (Sproul, p 30)***

6. To reap a harvest
 - a) Within the Roman church – **Mark 4:20** *“But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”*
 - b) Outside the church - **Mat 9:37–38** *“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

IV. The Theme of the Letter

V16-17 [[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 for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

- A. I am not ashamed of the gospel
 1. **1 Cor 1:18** *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
 2. Christ's crucifixion was a dishonorable death, by all human standards. **1 Cor 1:22–23** *“For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles”*
 3. The reproach of Christ clings to those who embrace Him - **1 Cor 4:9–13** *“For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. “*
- B. For it (the gospel) is the power of God for salvation
 1. Power – dunamos – Greek from which we get the word dynamite. The power of the gospel, is literally, dynamite! The Gospel, when responded to by faith, results in a dynamic result that cannot be denied. It is a change that is unexplainable except for the power of God.
 2. Salvation means rescue or deliverance
 3. The gospel of Christ has the power to save us from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin, from the presence of sin, but it only has this power for those who believe.
- C. The Righteous shall live by faith
 1. This Righteousness is not of ourselves but of God - **Phil 3:8–9** *“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— “*

2. God gives his own righteousness to make man righteous by faith - **Rom 3:22** **"the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."**
3. The righteous shall live by faith – "Think of how the righteousness revealed in Christ motivated Paul! It is possible for men and women to stand sinless before God. It is possible to know that one has eternal life. It is possible to be free from the frustration of trying to earn righteousness and Heaven. The sole requirement is faith. Here is the greatest news ever proclaimed!" (Hughes)

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