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Last time we began with a basic introduction to the book of Romans. As is all Scripture, it is the Word of God, perfect and infallible as He is. The Bible itself will always be the authority that governs our studies.

The book of Romans is a very thorough presentation of Christian faith and practice. The outworking of our faith in practice is based on important theological truths that teach us the essence and character of God. We study the Bible to better know God and grow in our relationship with Him.

In Romans 1, the apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, begins a presentation of the gospel (meaning “good news”) that God has for us, and why we desperately need it. A person must understand his “lost” condition before he will accept God’s free gift to be “saved” from the consequences.

However, the Bible (including this letter) is far greater than just a textual outline of instructions would be. We study it not as we would review an answer key for questions on a test. Rather, God through His Holy Spirit reveals to us who He is and how He loves us so.

As expected, the opening section of most any letter is a greeting. Paul has not yet visited Rome, so his is a personal introduction as well. But the careful reader can learn much from the introductory sections of the NT epistles. We should not read our Bibles too fast!

With that in mind, there are some noteworthy statements in the introductory section of Romans, including the following:

- 1) In Romans 1:1, Paul first presents himself as a “bondservant of Jesus Christ”, and then as “called to be an apostle”. What might we learn from that?
- 2) Note that Paul makes a point of tying his message to the OT Scripture and the prophets (v. 2). It is important for his Jewish readers to know that consistency, and for others to also understand this was God’s plan all along.

- 3) The gospel is a Person, not a program. That Person is none other than God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (v. 3). Note here and throughout the NT epistles the manner in which Christ is referenced.

- 4) There are many irrefutable declarations that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but none greater than His resurrection from the dead (v. 4).

- 5) It is through Christ alone that Paul (and we) receive grace (the undeserved favor that saves us). The apostles (including Paul) were all directly commissioned by Christ to proclaim the message of Christ to all (apostle means “messenger”). (v. 5)

- 6) Just as Paul was called by Christ, so also is every believer (v. 6). It is emphasized that God took the initiative in the salvation of every believer, referred to multiple times in the NT.

- 7) The epistles are written to the church, which by definition is made up of all believers... everyone who has placed their faith in Christ. We are beloved of God, and all believers (not just some) are called to be “saints” (meaning to be ‘set apart).

- 8) Paul’s greeting of “grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” is repeated throughout his epistles. (v. 7) In doing so, he is strongly implying the equality of the Son with the Father. He is also combining standard greetings from both the Greek and Hebrew cultures.

- 9) In most cases (Galatians is a notable exception), Paul commends those receiving the letter as warranted, before offering instructions and often correction. Note the example of the faith of the Roman believers that was spoken about throughout the world (v. 8).

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- 1) How have we recognized our own “lost” condition and our need of a Savior?
- 2) How is our attitude as a bondservant of Christ?
- 3) How is our faith an example to others?

Romans 1

Greeting and Introduction

¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God ² which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed (a descendant) of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness.

⁵ Through Him we have received grace and apostleship to call people from among all nations to obedience to the faith for His name's sake.

⁶ And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷ To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Desire to Visit Rome

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

⁹ For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I mention you continually in my prayers, ¹⁰ asking that by God's will, at last now the way may be opened for me to come to you.

¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, so that you may be strengthened, ¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I have often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), so that I might harvest some fruit among you, as well as among the other Gentiles.

¹⁴ I have an obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, I am ready and eager to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome.

The Just Live by Faith

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, 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 the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed through faith that leads to more faith. As it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Memory Verse for the Week

*John 3:16 – For God so loved the world
that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believes in Him
should not perish but have everlasting life.*