



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Romans

Lesson 2: Romans 1:1-17

Paul's letter to the brethren at Rome begins differently than the majority of his other writings. Although he still identifies himself as an apostle immediately, in this letter he offers no defense of his apostleship beyond simply stating it as fact. This implies that the Christians at Rome already accepted his inspired authority. From there he weaves a beautiful cord of connection between himself and the Romans that is centered in their mutual faith in Christ, and their faithful obedience to His teachings.

Before You Begin: Read Romans 1:1-17 noting any key words in this passage and their connections to each other.

Part of what made Paul's teachings so impactful was his ability to draw on commonalities with those he was trying to reach. When you are studying with someone, what steps do you take to relate to them and connect with them as you approach God's word?

Read Romans 1:1

Paul begins his letter by identifying 3 things about himself:

1. "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus." The word for "servant" here is not "diákonos" which we often think of as "servant," and from which we get our English word "deacon." This word is "doúlos" which literally means "slave." This word describes an individual whose entire livelihood and existence is dedicated to fulfilling the will of another. As he states in Galatians 2:20, and as he will describe in detail in chapter six, Paul had truly died to his own wants and wishes and was living fully for the cause of Christ.
2. "Called to be an apostle." Here is Paul's source of authority. He does not teach on his own merit, but as one sent by Christ Himself.
3. "Set apart for the gospel of God." Paul's choice of wording here is very interesting. According to the Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, the Greek word translated "set apart" here is aphorízō, and was actually the word that the Pharisees got their name from. It seems that Paul is drawing a comparison here between his old life and his new life. As a Pharisee, he was "set apart" because



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of the law. Now he is “set apart” for the gospel of God.

Can we truly say that we are a doulos of Christ?

Read Romans 1:2-6

From here Paul basically gives a bullet list of the gospel:

- “Which he promised beforehand” – Paul is reminding the Romans that the gospel was not some accidental Plan B, but rather it was intended and promised from long ago.
- “Through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” – How can they know that it was promised beforehand? Because of all the prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ. It’s also important to remember what exactly Paul is referring to when he says “holy Scriptures.” At this point in time, the New Testament was still being written, so the “holy Scriptures” here are what we now refer to as the Old Testament. The Old Testament is just as inspired, and just as vital to understanding the gospel as the New Testament.
- “Concerning his Son” – Paul is establishing right from the beginning that Jesus is truly the Son of God.
- “Who was descended from David according to the flesh” – And that both the

promises and the prophecies were fulfilled when Jesus was born of the line of David.

- “And was declared to be the Son of God” – Jesus’ deity is no longer in question, but has been indisputably declared for all to see.
- “In power according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead” – This could be understood as according to “the” power, the intrinsic power possessed the Spirit. How has Jesus undeniably been declared to be the Son of God? By his resurrection from the dead.
- “Jesus Christ our Lord” – Who it is that we believe, obey and serve.
- “Through whom we have received grace and apostleship” – Why we believe, obey and serve Him.
- “To bring about the obedience of faith” – What He expects our belief to result in.
- “For the sake of his name” – Why are we to obey? To bring glory to Christ.
- “Among all the nations including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” – All nations are now called to belong to Jesus Christ, salvation is not just for the Jews.

Here in 11 neat little bullets Paul is able to completely outline God’s entire plan for bringing salvation to man through Christ. This foundation of the faith is where Paul begins, even though he is writing to fellow believers.



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When we are studying with others, do we overcomplicate things, or skip the foundation of the gospel to instead jump straight into “issues?” If so, what is the danger in this approach to Bible study?

Use Paul’s 11-point study outline, and complete it with passages for each point.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

Read Romans 1:7

Paul is also laying a foundation of unity for the rest of his letter. By saying, “to all those in Rome...called to be saints,” he is emphasizing the equality of the Jewish and Gentile brethren. The gospel is the same for all.

While we don’t struggle with Jew/Gentile divisions today, what struggles affect the unity of the body you worship with, and what can be done to improve your unity?

Read Romans 1:8-10

When approaching God’s word, we should always look for the four P’s: purpose statements, petition verbs, prevalence and prayers. Just like you and I, Paul prayed about what was important to him and here we have a brief glimpse into his prayer life. We learn that first and foremost Paul thanked God daily for his Roman brethren, and that he was able to be thankful for them because their faith was so obvious that it was being proclaimed to the entire world.

Secondly, we see that Paul is praying to be allowed to go to the brethren in Rome, and he is asking for their prayers as well. Even though he has yet to be in Rome, he loves the Roman Christians so much that he is literally longing to be with them.



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Do we thank God daily for the blessings we have in the church? Would Paul be able to thank God for our congregation because the entire community is talking about our faith?

How do our prayers compare to Paul's?

Read Romans 1:11-15

Here Paul explains why he is longing to go to Rome, he wants to encourage the brethren and to be encouraged by them. It's almost as though he is afraid the brethren in Rome will feel neglected by him, because he is assuring them that he has intended to come to them many times but has been prevented from doing so.

Do we truly long to be with the brethren as Paul did? When we are with the brethren are we intentional about giving and receiving encouragement, or do we struggle with focusing on ourselves?

Read Romans 1:16-17

The power of salvation is found in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And although God's plan began with the Jews, in Christ His ultimate purpose was fulfilled in bringing that salvation to all of mankind. These two verses are the key to Romans, and indeed in my mind to all of Scripture, as evidenced by verse 17 being quoted from Habakkuk 2:4, and also found in Hebrews 10:38 and Galatians 3:11.

Jesus has made salvation accessible to us, however our response to the gospel, our willingness to live by faith, is paramount. Unless we live our lives based on our faith, Jesus' sacrifice means nothing to us. This is also seen in the powerful phrase, "from faith, for faith." God's plan is shown from our faith, from how we live in this world, for the faith of those around us. How will our beloved lost come to know Christ if they don't first see Him in us? How will they come to know righteousness and salvation if we don't first open our mouths and teach them? And what good will it do for us to proclaim that Christ is our Savior, if we refuse to live by faith?

Are we ashamed of the gospel? If we say no, in what ways are we proudly proclaiming Christ crucified to those around us?



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When we teach the gospel, do we teach that it is only for those who are willing to truly believe as Scripture defines belief?

Do we hold each other accountable to the biblical standard? Do we demand that we all live by faith, or are we content to sit in a pew by faith?

Read Romans 1:16-17 every day for the next week, and truly ask yourself if these verses describe you. If they don't, what changes do you need to make? If they do, are you truly striving to share God's salvation with anyone and everyone who will listen?