

Intro:

About six months of preaching, totaling twenty-four messages, brings us to the end of Romans 1.17. We took a month off for Christmas, so it seems longer!

We began Sept 23, with the message, “Paul”.

The last eight messages came from Rm 1.15-17. They seem to me to be among the most significant messages I have ever preached. They get right at the heart of the gospel.

There is going to be much more. This is the theme of Romans, the gospel of God, or ‘how God marvelously judged sin, saved sinners, and gave them the righteousness of His Son instead of their own obvious and epidemic unrighteousness’.

Before we move on to the next section, I want to give you a survey message in review of where we have been. Then I think I will give you a survey message in anticipation of where we will go in the next section of Romans. This will help us see the overall plan of the epistle when we are lost in the deep dark woods of individual verses and words over which I will no doubt pause for some contemplation.

What we are trying to do today is get some perspective on where we’ve been.

It is like we are traveling along a narrow winding way, heavily forested. We found many interesting things to see along the way, but the whole way we came is hidden in the twists and turns of the path, the view blocked by massive boulders and tall trees.

As we pause, we discover ourselves on a plateau where we can look back and see the whole way we came. Now, with full understanding of the details of that way, we can look back over our trail with a greater appreciation for all that we saw along the way.

At least, that is the poetic metaphor that hopeless romantics might think of as they talk simply of ‘review’!

But our review is not without purpose or without a point. I have entitled this message:

The Preacher and his Preaching

Our verses are very much introductory verses. They introduce the whole subject of the epistle in every way.

Paul wrote to commend himself to them and to give, especially, a gift of the gospel in written form. In doing so, he gives us a gift of the most explicit communication of the gospel in the Bible.

Read Rm 1.1-17

Proposition: Your eternal life depends on accepting the credentials and message of the apostle Paul.

I. Apostolic credentials rest on an authentic message (1-7)

A. The apostolic claim itself (1)

1. The terms:

- a. 'Bond-slave' (KJV – 'servant')
- b. 'Apostle' = 'a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders'¹
- c. 'Set apart'

2. The terms speak of authority

- a. By their very nature as headlining credentials
- b. By Christian tradition (yes, tradition as early as AD 56!)

1) Jesus selected apostles from among his followers (Lk 6.13)

Luke 6:13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

- a) The term comes from Jesus
- b) These are set apart from other disciples for a mission

2) The apostles are the foundation of the Christian church

- a) We see their leadership everywhere in the book of Acts

Lead in preaching, discipline, people come to them and look to them for decisions/judgements/settling questions ...

b) Later explicitly revealed in the Scriptures

- i) Eph 2:20 – the church is 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets'
- ii) Rev 21.14 – the wall of the city has twelve foundations, named for the twelve apostles

¹ Gingrich *Shorter Lexicon*.

B. The apostolic claim is grounded in the gospel (2-6)

1. The gospel of God concerning his Son was promised through the prophets (OT) (2)
 - a. God's Son was born of the seed of David according to the flesh (3)
 - b. God's Son was declared to the world with power by the resurrection (4)
2. The person of the gospel, Jesus Christ, gave 'grace and apostleship' (5-6)
 - a. Recall the definition of an apostle: 'a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders'²
 - b. All the apostles were sent forth with orders
 - c. Paul was specifically sent forth with orders to go to the Gentiles

See Ac 9:

- Read account of confrontation on the road: Ac 9.1-9
- Read account of visitation to Ananias: Ac 9.10-16
- Read account of Ananias' visitation to Saul: Ac 8.17-19

C. The apostle offers personal greeting '*from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*' (7)

Do you believe Paul had the authority to give that greeting?

The apostolic credentials rest on an authentic message: the gospel.

- You cannot have the gospel without the apostles.
- You cannot have the letter to the Romans without Paul.

² Gingrich *Shorter Lexicon*.

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II. Apostolic message energizes apostolic ministry (8-15)

In the second part of the introduction, Paul turns from formal credentialing to personal planning (and praying).

- A. The gospel is behind the apostle's spiritual activity (8-10)
1. I thank God for you – Activity: Thanksgiving; Ground: their reception of the gospel (8)
 2. I serve God by preaching the gospel (9a)
 3. I make mention of you [praying] (9b-10)
- B. The gospel is behind the apostle's personal desires (11-12)
1. Longs to see them to give them a spiritual gift
 2. Longs to see them to receive from them mutual encouragement

This mutual blessing will come from the activity of 'faith, both yours and mine', *i.e.*, their mutual faith in the gospel of God

- C. The gospel is behind the apostle's plans for the future (13-15)
1. I have planned to come to you, but have been hindered (13)
 2. I am under obligation to a whole world of Gentiles (14)

This by his specific apostolic commission — Paul was sent somewhere, to someone.

- The other apostles were primarily occupied in a Jewish context (at least as we see them in the book of Acts)
- Paul is specifically set apart from even the other apostles for a Gentile ministry

3. Therefore, I am eager to preach in Rome also (15)

I saw a very interesting article in the paper yesterday. A few years ago, some hunters discovered the body of a man who died in a glacier in the interior of BC — he is named 'Kwaday Dan Ts'inchí' which means 'Long Ago Person Found'.

- The article said 240 First Nations people volunteered for DNA matching and so far 17 individuals are known descendants of this man, a man who has been dead over 400 years.

You and I, Gentile believers, are spiritual descendants of Paul's apostolic ministry. Here we are, hearing and preaching the gospel because Paul was sent to the Gentiles.

Proposition: Your eternal life depends on accepting the credentials and message of the apostle Paul.

- Your life ought to be active in some way in this same ministry – energized by the same gospel.
- Paul was sent somewhere to someone, and so are you — not as an apostle, but as a disciple.

III. Apostolic ministry consists in preaching the saving message (16-17)

I hardly think I have any need of saying much about these last two verses to you; we have *thoroughly* exposed their meaning in the last seven weeks. But let's summarize:

- A. Paul *glories* in the gospel [he is not ashamed]
- B. Paul glories because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation
 1. The 'dynamite of God' – inherent power
 2. The means of effecting spiritual change
 3. Available to every individual who believes ('to every believing one') [singular]
 4. Bringing Jews and Gentiles into the same blessings and privileges, the promises of God uttered to and through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

You were lost, but now are found!

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- C. Paul sees the power of God manifested in the display of righteousness 'out of faith unto faith' – in lives radically changed from death to life

Jesus said that this reality, this changed life was true of disciples:

Read Mt 5.13-16

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Conclusion:

Do you have eternal life?

Do you accept the authority of the apostle Paul to speak to your spiritual condition?

Have you joined with the apostle Paul in the apostolic ministry?

Is your life transformed by the powerful righteousness displaying gospel?