

“Good News from God for all People”

Romans 16.25-27

BRIEFLY Remind you of the STORIES OF THREE MEN

In 386 a 32 yr old NORTH AFRICAN was in Milan, Italy / Teacher: Literature
Brilliant & Handsome / Slave of his Passions and Object of his Mother’s Prayers
INTELLECUTUALLY CONVINCED of Truth of Christianity
MORALLY POWERLESS TO CONTROL HIS PASSIONS

Let him tell the story: “Suddenly I heard a voice from the nearby house chanting... repeating over and over, ‘Pick up and read, pick up and read’...I interpreted it solely as a divine command to me to open the book and read the first chapter I might find...So I hurried back to the place where...I had put the book of the apostle. (*Which was Paul’s letter to the Romans.*) I seized it, opened it, and read the first passage on which my eye lit: ‘Not in riots and drunken parties, not in eroticism and indecencies, not in strife and rivalry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh and its lusts’ (Romans 13). I neither wished nor needed to read further. At once, with the last words of this sentence, it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled”

We know him today Augustine, Bishop of Hippo / greatest Latin Father of Church

1515 German professor was also in SPIRITUAL CRISIS / Intellectual not Moral
DEVOUT CATHOLIC MONK

“I was a good monk, if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I”

DESPITE Good MONKERY / No Peace with God / Prof: Bible at Wittenburg Uni

“I had greatly longed to understand Paul’s letter to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression ‘the righteousness of God’, because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and acts righteously in punishing the unrighteous...Night and day I pondered until...I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on new meaning, and whereas before ‘the righteousness of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven.”

Protestant

Dr. Martin Luther > moved by these words from Romans > Father of Reformation

1738 London, England > a reading of Commentary on Romans by Martin Luther Young intellectual who belonged to OXFORD HOLY CLUB was in attendance

AS faithful member of this club / did good works, charity, spiritual exercises
BEEN MISSIONARY TO AMERICA FOR 2 YEARS / Disillusioned, Empty

He describes what happened: “About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death”

that Night JOHN WESLEY / received Salvation by Grace through Faith
AS DESCRIBED BY LUTHER / AS REVEALED THROUGH PAUL

BECAME Instrument of God to Ignite the GREAT AWAKENING / UK & USA

Stories sound familiar? Stood here and read them last September 1, 2002
My Prayer > Some of YOU have stories how God used Romans in YOUR life

God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & God of Augustine, Luther, Wesley IS YOURS

Romans > VERY POSSIBLY – Most Studied Document in Human History
2000 years – Almost every Nation – Countless Millions – Read and Studied
ICF > 8 months \ James Boice 8 years \ Martyn Lloyd Jones 14 years

LUTHER “Chief part of the NT, and the very purest gospel”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge – English poet – “the profoundest book in existence”

JAMES BOICE “Christianity has been the most powerful, transforming force in human history – and the book of Romans is the most, basic, most comprehensive statement of true Christianity”

This morning SAD FAREWELL to our Dear Friends > Paul and his Good Book

READ > 16.25 – 27 “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-- to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

1. Good News 2. from God 3. for all People

1. Good News

a) The Message v. 25 “gospel” > Word means “Good News”

FITTING THAT ROMANS ends w/ DOXOLOGY > glory & praise Good God

NO better News 8.1 “there is now no condemnation for those who are in X Jesus”

Context > No WORSE News 3.23 all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God
Only Sick need a Doctor \ Only those who know LOST cry out TO BE FOUND

MODERN MAN THINKS he’s TOO SOPHISTICATED for Such a Message
God commands that All Men and Women everywhere Repent

PROMISE TO BELIEVERS 8.38,39 “neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

b) The Man v. 25 “the proclamation of Jesus Christ” HE IS THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus IS THE GOSPEL > THAT IS WHY IT IS GOOD NEWS

JAMES BOICE “One of the great tragedies of the church down through the ages is that Christians have repeatedly allowed other things to rise to undue prominence and so eclipse the preeminence of Christ.”

MICHAEL GREEN “Jesus is not just a great teacher or just a hero or martyr; nor is he just a prophet or a holy man authorized and sent by God. But in Jesus Christ we see no less than God made manifest in human flesh. All of the divine that could be concentrated in human form was embodied in that carpenter from Nazareth... The Christian faith is the only one that rests entirely on the person of its founder, and he is no mythical figure but a well-documented historical person whose life, death, and resurrection fully endorse the majestic claims He made about Himself and others made about Him.”

INTERESTING how Closing Words of Romans // Opening Words

HOW did he WRITE THIS MASTERPIECE WITHOUT WORD PROCESSING?

1.2-4 gospel...regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

RED LETTER BIBLE > ALL OF IT > EVERY WORD > APOSTOLIC
 Authoritative Message of King Jesus
 God breathed > Inerrant Record of His Will and Ways > Holy Scripture

c) The Means > how ? v. 26 “now revealed and made known”

Jesus asked Simon Peter "Who do you say I am?" He answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven” Mt 16

DO NOT KNOW GOD BY OWN ABILITY > God MUST Reveal Himself to Us

PAUL’S TESTIMONY to Galatians >I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ...God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles 1.11,12,15 16

1.17 “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed”

Letter to Romans > Given by Inspiration of Spirit of God
 Reader of Romans > Needs Illumination by the Spirit of God

d) The Mystery “the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past”

Mystery > OPEN SECRET > Truth from God which had not been Known Before

PAUL – Apostle to Gentiles > Given SPECIAL INSIGHT > Revelation
 To Ephesians: “my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is - that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” 3.4-6

NO LONGER HIDDEN SECRET > Mystery Revealed in Christ by God’s Spirit
 WE ARE ONE FAMILY OF FAITH IN HIM > All Sons and Daughters of God

e) The Messengers: Prophets v. 26 “through the prophetic writings”

Based on Prophetic writings > OT & NT Prophets

OT Prophets > Preached a Christ they saw through a Glass Darkly > 1 Pet 1.10,11
 “Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”

IN JESUS THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY HAS COME > Morning Star has Dawned

NT Prophetic Writings > Rightly Explain and Apply the OT Prophetic Promises

Romans > Paul preaches Gospel > SPEAKING AS A PROPHET AND APOSTLE

Supports his Gospel Message from OT as Holy Spirit inspired him to Understand

f) The Mandate v. 25 “to establish you” Establish “settled, strong, unshaken”

ONLY GOD CAN SO ESTABLISH US > Paul cannot, pastors, people, parents
 GOD ALONE IS THE SOLID ROCK > only Adequate Foundation

God’s Word > IMMOVABLE ROCK > Endures the Storms of Life

2. from God

a) Sovereign v. 25 “to him who is able” ABLE = Unstoppable, Unlimitable

MANY GREAT PROMISES OF GOD’S SOVEREIGN ABILITY

Jesus “is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” Hebrews 7.25

“he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day” 2 Timothy 1.12

“God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9.8

“he is able to help those who are being tempted” Hebrews 2.18

“him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” Ephes 3.20

“him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--to the only God our Savior” Jude 24

AFTER STUDYING ROMANS we should NEVER QUESTION If God is Able

Should be ABUNDANTLY CONVINCED 11.36 “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”

JOHN STOTT The vision of Paul’s doxology “is of God’s ability to establish the multi-ethnic church in Rome, of which Paul has been dreaming, and to strengthen its members in truth, holiness and unity.”

b) Exclusive v. 27 “only wise God” > THE ONLY GOD > What! How Dare You!
ONLY > word will get you into trouble today

ONLY > word for Narrow, Minded, Pig-headed BIGOTS > Like Apostle Paul
NEVER THOUGHT OF YOURSELF IN SUCH TERMS > many others do!

3.30 there is only one God / 9.27 only the remnant will be saved.

How DARE YOU say > Bible Alone is God’s Word > Jesus ONLY saves from Sin
Who are you to CONDEMN ALL OTHER sincere Religions & Believers?
YOU “I did not realize I was!” \ Other side of the Coin of our Doctrine

WORLD HAS NO PLACE FOR JESUS > No Room in the Inn at Bethlehem
ONLY PLACE WAS TO HANG HIM ON A CROSS OUTSIDE THE CITY
SUFFERING SAVIOR > NOW Risen King > ONLY WISE GOD

c) Wisdom v. 27 “only wise God” > Unique, Unrivaled Message of God’s Gospel

God’s Wisdom revealed in Romans -

1-4 He Justifies Sinful Man and REMAIN JUST > by sending His Own Son
TO FULLFIL THE JUST DEMANDS OF HIS OWN LAW
Jesus dies our Death / Pays our sin’s Penalty / Fulfills God’s Righteousness
Who would imagine that Creator would die in place of His Creatures?

5-8 Demand Man’s Obedience even though Salvation is Gift of Grace
Grace = Our works have no part of Salvation, no Merit, Undeserved

Wisdom of God > He SAVES and SANCTIFIES > Redeems & Regenerates
 New Record and New Heart / Blood of Christ and Fullness of Holy Spirit
 God who Freely Saves now demands Faithful Service
 Obedience becomes the EVIDENCE that one is SAVED BY GRACE

BIBLICAL BALANCE v. 26 “Believe and Obey”

9-11 Wise God choose the Family of Abraham / Nation of Israel
 But they played the harlot / became “disobedient and obstinate people”
 THEIR SIN opened Door of Salvation FOR ALL NATIONS
 MERCY to Nations / Provokes GOSPEL ENVY among Chosen Jews

12-15 Paradox of Dying to Live> Contrary to All we NATURALLY Think or Feel
 Ultimate FREEDOM> Dying to Self> Living for Glory of God & Good of Others

1534 William Tyndale wrote a commentary to Romans: “Now go to, reader, and according to the order of Paul’s writing, even so do thou. First behold thyself diligently in the law of God, and see there thy just damnation. Secondly turn thine eyes to Christ, and see there the exceeding mercy of thy most kind and loving Father. Thirdly remember that Christ made not this atonement that thou shouldst anger God again: neither he cleansed thee, that thou shouldst return (as a swine) unto thine old puddle again: but that thou shouldst be a new creature and live a new life after the will of God and not of the flesh. And be diligent lest through thine own negligence and unthankfulness thou lose this favor and mercy again.”

d) Everlasting v 26 “the eternal God” > No Beginning or End > Alpha & Omega

JESUS CHRIST clearly has EXCEEDED his 15 minutes of Fame
 Jesus Christ Superstar – Always Latest & Greatest – FOR EVERY GENERATION

v. 27 TO HIM “be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

He is the Eternal God > He will be Glorious Forever

3. for all people

a) Paul’s Gospel v. 25 “my gospel”

1.1 “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, and set apart for the gospel of God

1) Message SAVED HIM > INCLUDES SELF IN ROMANS 5 – saying “WE”

“we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand” (5.1,2)

2) Message REVEALED TO HIM > 1.1 “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, and set apart for the gospel of God”

3) Message LIVED FOR > 6.4 “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

4) Message DIED FOR > 6.5 “If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”

TESTIFIED > “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Philippians 1.21

NOW WE belong to ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH
Church built on Foundation of Prophets and Apostles > JC Chief Cornerstone

HOW DARE ANYONE CONSIDER THEMSELVES AN APOSTLE TODAY!

b) OUR GOSPEL > we’re NOT Apostles > Believe It, Changed by It
Message which has SAVED us > LIVE for > DIE FOR

v. 26 “so that all nations might believe and obey him”

STOTT “It is fair to say that the major themes of Paul’s letter are encapsulated in the doxology: the power of God to save and to establish; the gospel and the mystery, once hidden and now revealed, which are Christ crucified and risen; the Christ-centered witness of the OT Scripture; the commission of God to make the good news universally known; the summons of all the nations to respond with obedience of faith and the saving wisdom of God, to whom all glory is due forever.”

Ch. 16 > PERSONAL GREETINGS > 33 Names \ 24 in Rome \ 9 in Corinth

Rarely does one LOVE BOOKS AND LOVE PEOPLE > but Paul Does

NOT YET been to Rome > already knows and PRAYS FOR 24 people there

- Even with modern travel and communications today, do we do this?
- Are we praying for people by name in cities we have never visited?

ANOTHER INTERESTING DISCOVERY

Deep, Profound, Solid Theology of Romans > for ORDINARY Believers

a servant of the church in Cenchrea...SOME who have been in prison with PAUL
women who work hard in the Lord... Rufus and his mother, who has been a
mother to PAUL, too...and the brothers with them... and all the saints

CHURCH INCLUDED INFLUENTIAL BELIEVERS

Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole CORINTHIAN church here enjoy
- wealthy man who opened his large home for the church meetings

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works > CITY TREASURER
Archeologists found his name inscribed in stone \ 1st C building project in Corinth

1. ONE FAMILY IN CHRIST > 33 names > Jew & Gentile > slaves & free >
rich & poor > men & women > young & old ALL ARE SIGNIFICANT
9 out of the 33 are women

2. CROSS SECTION of LIFE > each served God in their place of calling
Did not ESCAPE from WORLD but ENGAGED World as Christ's Ambassadors

3. WORK of GLOBAL MISSION is Task of Whole Church
Donald Barnhouse "Roman slaves, people utterly without status in the ancient
world were contacted by Paul and brought to faith in Christ and became members
of the body of Christ. Are you interested when you hear that there are new
believers in an Indian tribe on the upper Amazon river? Does your heart go out to
those worshipping in a church in Africa whose mud pews are baked in the sun
before the mud walls are built around them and the palm roof goes over them?
Quartus – the fourth slave in Gaius' household in Corinth - knew nobody in Rome
and nobody in Rome had ever heard of Quartus, but he loved them and he wanted
them to know it. God has his people in all these places, and there are others who
have not heard the gospel. Shouldn't you help take it to them?"

COME TO THE END OF ROMANS > I HOPE IT IS JUST A BEGINNING

WILLIAM TYNDALE – English forerunners to the Reformation / wrote in 1538
"No man can read (Romans)...too often or study it too well; for the more it is
studied the easier it is, the more it is chewed the pleasanter it is...it is the principal
and most excellent part of the New Testament...a light and a way unto the whole
Scripture"