

# Soul-Full: Living Out a Robust Faith

## A Study in Romans

### Week 1 – Romans 1 – Unashamed!

The Book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul around AD 57. It was originally addressed to the church in imperial Rome, a group of believers he had never met but longed to see. The theme of the Book of Romans is unequivocally the gospel of Jesus Christ whereby sinful man can be declared righteous by God through repentance and faith.

#### I. The Gospel of God-Romans 1:1-15

Paul opened his letter declaring himself as “a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, and one set apart for the gospel of God” (1:1). No Roman citizen or cultured Greek would ever use such demeaning rhetoric as part of their résumé, but Paul belonged without reserve to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul reminded his readers of the humanity of our Lord as a descendant of David as well as the absolute validation of *the deity* of Christ by “the resurrection from the dead” (1:3-4).

Paul used a common salutation to greet believers: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”(1:7). Real peace is the result of the grace of God. Grace is what we receive. Peace is what we experience.

Paul longed to go to Rome to encourage and further establish the faith of the believers residing there. Their faith was being “proclaimed throughout the whole [known] world”(1:8). He was not intentionally neglecting them but had been prevented from carrying out those plans. The implication being that the Lord had redirected him on several occasions when his heart’s desire had been to travel to Rome. Paul was under obligation to take the gospel “both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish” (1:14).

#### II. The Righteousness of God-Romans 1:16-17; 20

In Romans 1:16 Paul declared, “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.” Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because it was (and is) the means by which lost mankind comes to the saving knowledge of Christ. It also was (and is) the means by which the righteousness of God was (and is) revealed.

A. The righteousness of God is *revealed through the gospel*. The gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith” (1:16-17). The righteousness of God cannot be earned by human merit or works of righteousness (see Eph. 2:8-10). It is judicially imputed to the individual who repents of his/her sins and turns to God in faith.

B. The righteousness of God is also *revealed through creation*. Psalm 50:6 says, “And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. Psalm 97:6 says, “The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen

His glory” (underline mine; also see Ps. 19:1). The reality of an intelligent Creator is woven in the DNA of His creation. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made” (Rom. 1:20).

God has declared His existence and His righteousness through the gospel and through His creation. God has made Himself abundantly known.

### III. The Unrighteousness of All Humankind-Romans 1:18-32

Since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, sinful mankind has resided under the wrath of God. Thankfully God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be His remedy for man’s ruin. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jesus is God’s one and only way to be saved (see John 14:6). “He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Although God has made the way for sinful mankind to be reconciled through Christ, many refuse His gracious offer of salvation. Some even deny His existence. “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:18-20 underline mine). God has revealed Himself in creation in such a way as to hold all people responsible.

Paul’s point in this section is not so much that God will ultimately punish those who reject Jesus and engage in idolatry and immorality. Paul is pointing out that idolatry and immorality are in themselves present tense punishment for rejecting God’s divine revelation. Because men reject what is clearly evident about God, He gives them over to their sins of idolatry, immorality, and perversion. Those who rebel against God cannot turn their backs on Him with impunity. Three times the text says that God gave them over to their own devices. “God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity” (1:24). “God gave them over to degrading passions” (1:26). “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper” (1:28). That is, God allowed their sin to run its natural course and downward spiral, which resulted in idolatry, sexual impurity, and moral depravity.

Paul listed just some of the manifestations of characteristics seen in those who would rebel against God. Sadly, willful rejection of divine revelation hardens the heart to the point that the rebel takes delight in sin and gives “hearty approval to those who practice them” (1:32).

Beloved, for those who have repented, believed, and received the Lord by grace through faith, God has decreed so much more for us than a life given over to self-gratification! In Romans 5:9-10 Paul wrote, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” We have been saved. We have been reconciled with God through faith in Christ. We have been indwelt by the Spirit of God. Our souls have been satisfied in Jesus, and we are called to live out a robust faith in Jesus Christ!