

Housegroup – Romans 1: 1-7

An Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Romans

Day 7

What does the Lord require of you? Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

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Structure of Study

1. The Context
2. A Brief look at different versions of the Bible
3. The first 7 verses

Context

For any letter, we need to ask a number of questions

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| Who wrote it? | The Apostle Paul – There is no reason to doubt this. It was almost certainly dictated by Paul and the words captured by his scribe Tertius. The original version was almost certainly written in Greek. |
| When was it written? | In the latter stages of Paul's third missionary journey, probably from somewhere in Asia or Greece. That places it between the early spring of AD57 and AD59. See Chapter 15: verses 23-29: 23. But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, 24 I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25 Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. |

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| | 28 So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. |
| Who is it written to? | The church in Rome, some Jews, but predominantly gentiles. To our knowledge, no apostle had yet taught in Rome. How did the Gospel reach Rome? We don't know, but the most likely is Roman Jews, converted in Jerusalem, possibly at Pentecost, who then returned home. See Chapter 1: verse 8 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world |
| What is its purpose? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prepare the way for his planned visit to Rome and then on to Spain. 2. To present the basis message of salvation to a church that had never heard the teaching of an apostle before. 3. To explain the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. |
| How does it apply to use today? | This is the basis truth about the Christian Faith. The message is timeless. Martin Luther's understanding of "justification by Faith" by studying Romans was his motivation for initiating the Reformation. |

Overall Structure of the Letter

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| 1:1-17 | Introduction | Catch people's attention |
| 1:18-4:25 | The problem and God's solution | Deliver the message |
| 5:1-8:39 | What it means to be <i>justified</i> by God | |
| 9:1-11:36 | The reason why so few Jews have been <i>saved</i> | |
| 12:1-15:13 | How the <i>Gospel</i> should impact on Christians | |
| 15:14 | Closing sections | Sum up |

Has anyone been on a training course on effective communication or public speaking?

If so, you will recognise the structure.

In this series, we will almost, but not quite get to the end of chapter 3. Clive plans to pick up from there in the autumn of 2017. (This is very similar to a pattern of sermons in autumn of 2014 in the evening service).

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If you were asked to explain the essence of the Christian faith to someone in 60 seconds, how would you set about it?

That was Paul's challenge. He was writing a letter to a group of people he had never met. He has reason to think that they are "good Christians".

Read chapter 1, verses 1-7.

Different Versions of the Bible

At the last housegroup, someone asked which version of the Bible I was using.

At the end of these notes, I have presented today's study from 5 different versions of the Bible. The book of Romans is quite hard to read. It is full of Christian "jargon".

To unpack the meaning, I find it helpful to look at different versions, but taking into account how the version was developed and how it is presented to us.

Eugene Patterson, for example, who wrote "The Message", states very clearly that his intention was to aid communication, not to create an authoritative basis for study.

Back to today's study:

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| 1. | What does Paul achieve in the extended greeting in verses 1-7? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He establishes his personal credentials. He explains succinctly the gospel he serves.• He catches people's attention. It leaves many questions unanswered. Readers will be keen to learn more. |
| 2. | What does verse 1 say about Paul? |
| | Servant (or slave) of Christ Jesus - Does it matter whether it is servant or slave? Called - How and who by? To be an Apostle - What is meant by the term Apostle here? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An important early Christian teacher or pioneering missionary.• A vigorous and pioneering advocate or supporter of a particular policy, idea, or cause.• A person sent by another Set apart, selected, commissioned To preach the gospel of God. |
| 3. | Why Paul? When did God chose Paul? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Because he was a well-educated Jew and had a thorough understanding of the Old Testament• He was a Roman citizen and understood other cultures• Look at Galatians Chapter 1 13. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15. But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace , was pleased 16. to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. |

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| 4. | <p>What does Paul say about the Gospel in verses 2-4?</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin: It comes from God (v2) • Long predicted: It is now new (v2) – It fulfils the promised seen throughout the OT. For Jews it represents the culmination of the promises in the OT, not an alternative • Substance: It is about Jesus, his son (v3,4) • Earthly life: A descendant of David • Significance: Power demonstrated by his resurrection. Look at the beautiful simplicity of the paraphrase in The Message: “His descent from David roots him in history; his unique identity as Son of God was shown by the Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead, setting him apart as the Messiah, our Master.” |
| 5. | <p>What was Christ’s Purpose (verse 5)</p> |
| | <p>To bring people to obedience through Faith</p> |
| 6. | <p>To whom is the Gospel addressed? (v6,7)</p> |
| | <p>It is universal. To ALL in Rome who are loved by God. Verse 6 mentions gentiles, but chapters 9-11 make it clear that the message is also addressed to Jews.</p> |
| 7. | <p>In summary</p> |
| | <p>Paul establishes own credentials in verse 1, he provides an executive summary in verses 2-5, and stresses its universality in verse 6.</p> |

| | NIV (2011)* English Version | ESV | Amplified Bible | New Living Translation | The Message |
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| | Translation “thought by thought” from the original Greek | | Shows alternative translations and adds words that are missing | Paraphrases intended to aid comprehension and communication | |
| | Written by 100s of people working for decades. | | | | The work of 1 man. |
| 1. | Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God – | Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, | FROM PAUL, a bond servant of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) called to be an apostle, (a special messenger) set apart to [preach] the Gospel (good news) of and from God, | This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. | I, Paul, am a devoted slave of Jesus Christ on assignment, authorized as an apostle to proclaim God’s words and acts. I write this letter to all the believers in Rome, God’s friends. |
| 2. | the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures | which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, | Which He promised in advance [long ago] through His prophets in the sacred Scriptures– | God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. | The sacred writings contain preliminary reports by the prophets on God’s Son. |
| 3. | regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, | concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh | [The Gospel] regarding His Son, Who as to the flesh (His human nature) was descended from David, | The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David’s family line, | His descent from David roots him in history; his unique identity as Son of God was shown by the Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead, setting him apart as the Messiah, our Master. |
| 4. | and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. | and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, | And [as to His divine nature] according to the Spirit of holiness was openly designated the Son of God in power [in a striking, triumphant and miraculous manner] by His resurrection from the dead, even Jesus Christ our Lord (the Messiah, the Anointed One). | and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. | Through him we received both the generous gift of his life and the urgent task of passing it on to others who receive it by entering into obedient trust in Jesus. |
| 5. | Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake. | through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, | It is through Him that we have received grace (God's unmerited favor) and [our] apostleship to promote obedience to the faith and make disciples for His name's sake among all the nations, | Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name. | You are who you are through this gift and call of Jesus Christ! |

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| 6. | And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. | including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. | And this includes you, called of Jesus Christ and invited [as you are] to belong to Him. | And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. | And I greet you now with all the generosity of God our Father and our Master Jesus, the Messiah. |
| 7. | To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. | To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. | To [you then] all God's beloved ones in Rome, called to be saints and designated for a consecrated life: Grace and spiritual blessing and peace be yours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. | I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. | |

*There are many versions of the NIV.

At St. Mary's we are used to the NIV (1984) English version. That version is no longer published.

The biggest change in the 2011 version is the change to "gender neutral" wording. "Brothers" becomes "Brothers and Sisters"; "his" becomes "theirs" etc.