

Romans, pt.1, 8.27.06

Our Powerful Gospel – Romans 1.1–17

Introduction

1. Quotes of Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley on the impact of Romans...book has played a huge role in the development of Christian beliefs and practice.
2. NLT paperback...use extensively in this study
3. Background to the letter – sent to the church (es) in Rome; the church (es) not founded by Paul; might've been started due to the events of Pentecost in Acts 2.10f; the purpose is to explain the gospel (defined the purpose of the Law; examines the sinfulness of man; the necessity of faith to be made righteous in God's sight; the empowerment of the Spirit; God's plan for natural Israel; the gospels impact on daily living)
4. Read selected text
5. Gospel – “the Good News”; OT transl into Greek (Septugant); the word is used to describe the announcement to the Jews that they were no longer under Babylonian captivity and could return to Israel; it's the idea of excitement, enthusiasm & emotion. They had been liberated from the bondage of slavery into the freedom of citizens of Israel; likewise the gospel Paul speaks of announces that we are no longer slaves to sin, but have been liberated to live as free citizens in the Kingdom of God. The gospel is the joyful proclamation of man's liberation from sin, Satan & death through the shed blood & resurrected Christ which is experienced thru faith in Him.
 - a. It's not like good news, “Gas has gone down by a nickel” but good news, “Gas is now 10c a gallon forever!”
6. Paul is eager to preach this gospel to the Romans because it is the power of God. His eagerness is due to the power he was witnessed both in him & through him.
 - a. Are you eager to proclaim the good news...our eagerness may be directly related to the impact it has had on us personally
 - b. We tell others the gospel for many reasons – it's the truth; there's an opportunity; the direction people are heading; the impact it has had on our life.

7. This gospel was proclaimed by the prophets (1.2) – Gen.3.15; Ps.22; 45; Is.53; Jer.31 the OT sacrifices & festivals were shadows of the reality in Christ

Our gospel is powerful because...

- It centers on a powerful person (1.3f, 9)
 - NLT: 3It is the Good News about his Son, Jesus, who came as a man, born into King David's royal family line. 4And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit.
 - It's the "gospel of His Son" ; "the gospel centered in his Son"
 - Verse 3 – His human nature; Luke's genealogy; the connection with David & God's promise
 - Verse 4 – His divine nature: His sonship was validated by his resurrection from the dead. Define Sonship – not created (John 1.1); but that he is of the same nature & has a place of both prominence & submission.
 - Dan Brown's book & movie, The DaVinci Code – based on Gnostic gospels; his novel was about the cover up of the total humanity of Jesus; he wasn't divine; the truth is that the Gnostic didn't believe in the humanity of Jesus;
 - Jesus is fully God & fully man; he laid down his divine nature when he came to earth; he became like Adam before the Fall;
 - Anything that detracts from either the humanity or divinity of Jesus must be rejected; any supposed gospel that doesn't emphasize the blood of Jesus and the necessity of faith in him is not a gospel, but a counterfeit. They may emphasize the teachings & life of Christ and not agree with the exclusivity of Jesus' claims
 - The gospel is an offense to the worldly mind; the world like Jesus the teacher...the lover...gentle...social activist...not Jesus the Atoner (the one who would experience the wrath of God for our sins) or as the only road to God.
 - WE try to make the gospel relevant (I'm all for making the gospel understandable...) but not watering it down or changing it: **Do not try to make the Bible relevant. Its**

relevance is axiomatic ... Do not defend God's word, but testify to it. ... Trust to the Word. It is a ship loaded to the very limits of her capacity.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer: advice he gave his seminary students.
Christianity Today, Vol. 30, no. 11.*

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- If Jesus preached the gospel that is popular today in America he would have never been crucified.
- The real gospel is seldom popular but it is the power of God because it emanates from a powerful person - 1 Cor.1.18, 23f. NLT -. 18I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognize this message as the very power of God...23So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended, and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. 24But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles,^[a] Christ is the mighty power of God and the wonderful wisdom of God.
- It's accessed by a powerful means (1.17)
 - NLT - 17This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."[[]
 - The only way to enter into a life giving relationship with God is through faith in Jesus. The only way to experience the GN is through complete trust/confidence in Jesus. The only way to be made right in God's sight is through faith in his Son
 - The radical nature of this...their mindset was so focused on keeping laws. & doing good.
 - Most of the world today doesn't understand the critical nature of the means of salvation. It's still true today - ask the average person, "How do you get to heaven...get in good with God...make God pleased with you?" The answer will be, "Try hard...do good...help others...etc."
 - Our relationship with God is started when we recognize our sin, seek his forgiveness and place our faith in Jesus & his shed blood.
 - What is faith? Absolute trust & surrender; complete confidence. ; It's not acknowledging truth or even praying a prayer of salvation...it's putting your complete trust in Jesus
 - HAVE YOU DONE THAT?

- The ongoing work of God in our life is not only started by faith, but it is maintained by faith. “The just shall LIVE by faith.” NLT: **This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.**
- Many have started with faith, but aren’t living by faith. Faith is the active ingredient in the overcoming Christian life. Believers who live in confident trust & surrender to God experience the power, pleasure and the joy of a lifegiving relationship with God.
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- It changes people in powerful ways (1.1, 5)
 - A servant of Jesus/ Jesus Christ’s slave; an apostle...both humility & authority are expressed; apostles were selected based upon personal experience with Jesus (Acts 1;)
 - “we received grace & apostleship”; Paul’s story & radical conversion. (Acts 9.15) This persecutor of the gospel becomes a preacher...leader of Judaism becomes a slave of Jesus.
 - There is no one on planet earth today, who is immune to the powerful gospel – Osama Bin Laden; Pres. Iran; Dictator of n.korea; Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhist; the meanest person you know; the hardest heart; none can withstand God’s powerful gospel; Communism tried to stop it; atheism tried to oppose it; ACLU tries to remove it; Islam seeks to overtake it; Satan ATTEMPTS to destroy it; BUT NO ONE CAN WITHSTAND OUR POWERFUL GOSPEL!
 - God laughs at their arrogance, like we laugh at our 4 year old who thinks he can beat us at arm wrestling.
 - Don’t grow overwhelmed by radical Islam or cold hearted materialism or angry fisted ideologues...the gospel isn’t limited by anyone or anything. Quit growing so shrill and negative. “It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone.”
 - Story in Charisma magazine about Muslim leader opposing Christian evangelist; the man was blind in one eye; trying to start a riot; suddenly healed during the meeting; rushed forward and gave his life to Christ.
 - More testimonies – As I look across this room...I see the powerful stories of how the gospel has changed you...some radical salvation...most it’s radical sanctification...YOU AREN’T THE SAME B/C OF THE POWERFUL GOSPEL!!
- It unlocks a powerful mystery (1.14, 16)
 - This gospel is for everyone. This is one of God’s great mysteries.

- **NLT: Rom.16.25f., – 25God is able to make you strong, just as the Good News says. It is the message about Jesus Christ and his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. 26But now as the prophets^[a] foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they might believe and obey Christ.**
- **Eph.3.3, 5f., – 3As I briefly mentioned earlier in this letter, God himself revealed his secret plan to me...5God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now he has revealed it by the Holy Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. 6And this is the secret plan: The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God's children. Both groups have believed the Good News, and both are part of the same body and enjoy together the promise of blessings through Christ Jesus.**
- **6.19 – 19And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words as I boldly explain God's secret plan that the Good News is for the Gentiles, too.**
- This was a radical concept. Through the cross, God accepts both Jews and Gentiles.
- The mystery is reversed for us. Paul's readers were mostly Jews coming to an understanding that the gospel was also for the non-Jews (Gentiles). We're Gentiles coming to an understanding that this gospel is also for the Jews.
 - Holly Field's words from a couple of weeks ago – we pray for the Jews, b/c the body of Christ's spiritual growth is stunted to a degree until the Jews come into the full realization that Jesus is the Messiah
 - Eph.2.14–18, esp.v.15 – “one new man”. Today it's like ½ the body is that of a 25 year old & the other ½ is that of a 2 year old.
 - Rom.11.11f., esp. v.12 in NLT. 11Did God's people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! His purpose was to make his salvation available to the Gentiles, and then the Jews would be jealous and want it for themselves. 12Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the Jews turned down God's offer of salvation, think how much greater a

blessing the world will share when the Jews finally accept it.

- It's essential that we pray for the salvation of the Jews, so that the body of Christ may be mature and complete!
- Example of what the body of Christ is like w/o the Jews. It's like building a house, but having no doors. You have huge openings and no privacy. You can live in the house but it's not complete w/o the doors...neither is the body of Christ w/o converted Jews.

Conclusion: Let us be eager and not ashamed of the Gospel (1.15f.)

There is no reason to be ashamed of the gospel; it is the only reality that can set people free from the bondages of this life into the freedom that God has for us! Let us be eager to both show it & tell it.

Have you trusted in the Gospel, the Good News? It is the only means of salvation...