

Victorious – Excuses

9/7/25

Romans 1:16-18

Sunday AM

Good AM – today we're starting a new series in the book of Romans that I've entitled – **Victorious**.

To be **victorious** is to successfully achieve a desired goal in the face of opposition, adversity, or difficulty.

Biblically speaking – to be victorious is to live life from the basis of Jesus finished victory on the cross instead of striving to succeed in our own ability and ingenuity. For in Jesus' death/resurrection, God dealt w/ sin's *penalty*, broke sin's *power*, and made us a new creation that will one day remove sin's *presence*.

This is the power of the single word Jesus uttered from the cross – *tetelestai* – which means *it is finished*.

In Jesus' day, *tetelestai* was used in (3) context. (1) it was used in a **business** context—on ancient receipts to say a debt had been paid in full. (2) It was used in a **judicial** context (in a court of law) to say a sentence was fully served. And (3) It was used in a **military** context meaning a battle had been won.

When Jesus hung on the cross and said *tetelestai*—He was declaring (1) the debt of your sin has been fully paid; (2) the judgment for your sin has been fully served; and (3) and the spiritual war against sin, death, and Satan has been fully won.

Declaring to all who've believed/received Jesus as Savior that the work of salvation, reconciliation has brought victory unto a new life fully yours in Christ.

In short, to be victorious means to stand in God's grace, fighting in the Spirit's strength, growing thru hardship, loving when it's costly, and hoping w/ great certainty b/c Jesus has won the victory on our behalf.

So – as we get started on this journey of victory, let me give you a basic introduction to the book of Romans.

Written by the Apostle Paul to the believers in Rome, this epistle is a battle hymn of victorious grace. In (16) closely argued chapters, Paul mapped out humanity's need, God's rescue, and the keys to a Spirit-filled life.

Moving from the courtroom of condemnation to the liberating verdict of God's grace, Romans is packed w/ essential truths necessary for each of us to live in daily victory. This is b/c Romans doesn't just explain salvation; it announces Jesus' victory over sin, death, and despair, inviting whosoever to come by faith.

This truth has resonated across the centuries, as Romans has both informed the mind and ignited a G.C. movement. Martin Luther famously called it *the most important piece of the NT* capable of nourishing the soul – leading him, b/c of God's revelation to him from Romans 1:17 to nail his 99 theses to the church door in Wittenberg that ignited the Reformation.

SO – to open Romans is to join a long line of witnesses who discovered that the gospel doesn't merely inform; it conquers – *humbling the sinner, exalting the Savior, and training people to walk in Christ's victorious life*.

WTM – today, I want to take a few moments to discuss the grace of God revealed to all of humanity thru-out human history to reveal the reality of God so that everyone is w/out excuse for their belief in God.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, b/c God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that all people are w/out excuse.

Romans 1:18-20

Note the last phrase – *all people are w/out excuse.*

What's an excuse? A story containing some truth yet told to avoid accountability. Rather than explaining *what occurred*, an excuse tries to explain *away*.

Yet – *excuses are like arm pits. Everyone has them, they stink – and when exposed, you're always sweating it out.*

Just for fun – I came across an article of real excuses people have used in the workplace.

- Sorry I'm late. My alarm went off, but my bed was holding me hostage.
- I didn't forget your text; I just remembered it at a very inconvenient time for 3 days.
- I would've been early, but traffic insisted I experience character development.
- I couldn't start the Zoom on time b/c my laptop wanted to install updates from the Bronze Age.
- I didn't procrastinate; I scheduled a panic for later.
- I would've called you back, but my introvert minutes had already run out.

In Romans 1 – Paul makes the case that as it comes to God and believing in Him – we're all w/out excuse b/c God has provided enough proof that all can believe.

Raising the Question – Have ever doubted if God exists? I have! Truth is – most everyone at some point in life has doubted if God is real and if He exists? This isn't all bad though b/c – *faith always presupposes doubt*. Meaning – **faith arises where certainty isn't possible**. See – if we could *see* everything and *prove* everything, then we wouldn't need faith but only sight to see it. Yet faith is trusting God in the presence of unanswered questions – not the absence of them.

SO – it's not a criminal offense to have doubt, but it is a significant issue if you never address your doubt. Jude 1:22 says to *be merciful to those who doubt* – b/c doubt is the starting line of discovering that God is.

WTS – I have a confession. I can't decisively prove that God exists (and neither can you). But I can offer credible evidence that He is. BTW – neither can an atheist prove that God doesn't exist. Both ideas require faith. To be sure though, I've got the easier task.

LME – while it's possible to provide evidence that the God does exist. It's also impossible to prove a negative proposition that He doesn't exist.

Example – if I claim purple tigers exists while you claim they don't exist – I only need to find (1) purple tiger to prove my claim, while you have to go to every corner of the universe (which is impossible) to ensure there are no purple tigers anywhere.

Point – when it comes to whether or not God exists, the issue isn't about proving whether He exists – the question is – where does the evidence lead us? If God has created the universe, then we ought to be able to find His fingerprints somewhere/anywhere After all – Psalm 19:1 says – *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.*

The Bible unapologetically declares that the world has been designed by God in such a way that there's no questioning an intelligent designer (God) made it all.

Which brings us back to our text for today...

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that all people are w/out excuse.

I want to give you (3) arguments for the God's existence I believe are credible/helpful. This is known as **general revelation** – which is truth that can't save you, but it can point you to the God who saves.

I God in the MORAL World

Our 1st witness to the veracity of God is man's innate conscience and sense of right/wrong and good/evil. I call this the **inward witness**.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, b/c God has made it plain to them.

Paul uses a word we're all familiar w/ – **wickedness** – the speaks to the idea of right/wrong and good/evil. Truth is – from birth, we all have a sense of morality – just watch the way a toddler acts when they know they've done something wrong. The question is – where do we get this idea? We get it from God b/c God is! Otherwise, if we're here by chance, there would be no such thing as right/wrong or good/evil.

This is known as the axiological or moral argument – and it was developed by such great thinkers as Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, and C.S. Lewis. It begins w/ the observation that objective moral values, truth, and duties have always existed w/in every soul and in every society thru-out civilization believing justice is better than injustice, kindness is better than cruelty, and love is better than hate. Thus, if the universe were the product of blind chance, then morality would be reduced to subjective preference w/ no firm foundation to stand on. Yet b/c right/wrong and good/evil are present – God, the personal Lawgiver must exist.

My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel/unjust. But how had I got this idea of just/unjust? A man doesn't call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. C.S. Lewis

II God in the PHYSICAL World

Our 2nd witness to the veracity of God is the physical universe around us. This our **in-plain-view witness**.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

If this is true, then there ought to be credible evidence to prove that God had a hand in creation. But I'm not here to argue how God created, but only that He created b/c ultimately, it's about the origin of the universe. Did or didn't God create?

Scientists agree that our universe had a beginning. The question is – *did God initiate the creation or did the universe somehow come into existence from nothing?* Here's the deal – both choices are a matter of faith b/c **to have a beginning requires having a cause**.

SO – if there is NO God, then either something came from nothing (which we know is impossible) or something that had a beginning (the universe) exists w/out a cause and that too is impossible.

Then there are the constants of physics in the universe. Science claims there are (4) primary constants upon which the structure of the universe is built that never change and on which everything else depends.

1 – **Gravitational Constant** – this determines the strength of gravity b/w masses. If it were slightly weaker, galaxies/planets wouldn't form; if stronger, stars would collapse quickly.

2 – **Speed of Light** – this refers to the universal speed of energy, matter, and information that's essential for relativity, space-time structure, and the way the universe holds together.

3 – **Planck's Constant** – this governs quantum mechanics or the behavior of particles at the smallest scales. W/out it, atoms, chemistry, and stable matter couldn't exist or would fall apart.

4 – **Cosmological Constant** – this controls the expansion rate of the universe (dark energy). If it were slightly different, the universe would have either collapsed back on itself or expanded too fast for galaxies and stars to form.

Each of these constants are **fine-tuned** w/ incredible precision. For example, physicists have calculated the cosmological constant to be set w/in 1 in 10^{120} – an unimaginably precise balance, pointing many to the likelihood of intentional design rather than chance.

Truth – Creation takes the stand to bears witness that what we see/experience didn't happen by chance or accident but that a higher, more intelligent power was involved – a prime mover and 1st cause.

Simplify – it'd be like us going to Mt. Rushmore to see the 600 ft sculpted faces of *Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt*, and *Lincoln* and thinking that years of erosion/earthquakes formed them. No one in their right mind would think that could've occurred, b/c we know by looking at it that someone designed/carved it.

III God in the **BIOLOGICAL** World

Our 3rd witness to the veracity of God is what I call the **micro witness** – or biological witness.

One of the clearest proofs of God is what you see in the mirror every day – YOU!
David said it best in Psalm 139:14 – *I praise you b/c I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

Consider how astounding the human body is. Your brain stores 100 tril. facts at once. Your mind makes 15k decisions every sec. Your nose can detect 10k smells. Your skin can feel 1/25k of an inch. Your tongue can detect (5) primary tastes – *sweet, sour, salty, bitter*, and *umami* simultaneously/precisely, giving your mouth a rich experience of flavor.

Or how about DNA. Scientist have described it as a text 3 bil. letters long, written in a 4-letter code – that if read aloud at 3 letters per sec. would take 31 yrs to read – and if printed, would stack as high as the Washington Monument.

But there's more – right now as you sit here listening to me – trils. of chemical reactions are reacting in your body – breathing, metabolizing, repairing, digesting as your brain fires off mils. of impulses every second.

Even as you look at me – your retina is using 130 mil. receptor cells performing 10 bil. calculations every sec. to see me and all that's around me. No wonder it's said that – *if you study the human eye atheism fades.*

Harvard professor/physician – Dr. Ming Wang, a former atheist said – *The complexity of the eye is impossible to explain by natural selection. It's the most powerful evidence for God's existence.*

Look in the mirror and consider the intricate wonder, design, and complexity of your body. All of it points to a Creator who fearfully/wonderfully made you.

This is but (3) proofs for God's existence revealed in general revelation – and still – it always comes back to faith – in what evidence will you put your trust.

I'm reminded of the story of the young skeptic who returned from his 1st semester at college to visit his elderly S.S. teacher who'd invited him over for a meal. While he hadn't been in college long, he'd been there long enough for the profs to test his faith. So, as she fixed him a meal, he informed her of his new beliefs. He said, "I once believed in God, but since studying science, I'm convinced God is but an empty idea." Holding up a raw egg, the S.S. teacher said, "Well, I've not studied science, but since you have, maybe you can tell me from where this egg came." He said, "It came from a hen." She asked, "And where did the hen come from?" He said, "Why, it hatched from an egg." She asked, "Can you tell me which existed first." He replied, "The hen, of course!" She said, "So, you mean that a hen existed w/out having come from an egg?" "Oh, no," said the man, "I guess I should've said the egg was first." She said, "You mean an egg existed w/out having come from a hen?" "Puzzled, he said "You're getting me confused." She replied, "Son, since you can't explain the existence of even an egg w/out God, can you expect me to believe you can explain the existence of the whole world w/out Him."