

Unashamed

Romans 1:1-17 NIV - My goals for us as we study Romans together:

1. That our thinking will be formed by the message of the gospel.
 2. That our lives will be transformed by the power of the gospel.
 3. That our hearts will become eager to share the love revealed in the gospel.
- I. The occasion.
- a. There are deep divisions between Jewish believers and Gentile believers that are threatening the unity of Christ's body. *Think of two deeply loved children who aren't speaking to one another right now. The parent's joy will never be complete until their children are not just loving them, but loving one another.
 - b. How did this division come about? (Scholars mostly agree on the following)
 - i. The church in Rome began when those saved at Pentecost reported back to the Jewish synagogues they came from. The first church in Rome was completely led by Jews.
 - ii. They were aware of Saul's conversion and were informed of the decision that Gentiles were welcome to the church without becoming Jews. (Acts 15) Gentiles were added to the church in Rome.
 - iii. A controversy between Jews and Jewish Christians became so heated that all Jews were kicked out of Rome in 49 AD by Claudius. Suetonius – "In 49 AD Claudius made an edict commanding all Jews to leave Rome because they were creating a disturbance at the instigation of Chrestus." Acts 18:2-3 "And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent makers." With the Jews gone, the leadership became entirely Gentile.
 - iv. The Jews were welcomed back in 54 AD by Nero after the death of Claudius. Priscilla and Aquila had become dear friends of Paul (risked their life for him) and have a part of the Roman church in their home. First it was Jews against Jewish Christians; now it's

Jewish Christians against Gentile Christians. They are probably the ones who have written about the growing divide.

- c. Paul is uniquely positioned to address this issue – not just for the church in Rome, but for the church of the ages. He’s a servant of Jesus Christ, and writing with the authority of an apostle.
 - i. Trained to be a Pharisee – understands the Jewish faith as good as anyone alive.
 - ii. Has been converted powerfully and then given the explanation of how the Jesus fulfills the promises of the Old Covenant from heavenly experiences. Galatians 1:11-12 “I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.”
 - iii. He is the apostle to the Gentiles. He’s never been there; he commends them for their contagious faith; he wants to visit them and not only encourage them but be encouraged by them, but he is going to address head on the division that exists.
- II. The root of the problem.
- a. A band-aid will not help, they need surgery. It seems to both sides that the problem is Jew/Gentile relations, but the problem is much deeper and the answer is not an adjustment, but humanity’s need for a new life.
 - b. We want easy fixes. Our 2011 Town and Country was wearing down but I was in denial. I kept replacing cheap things but there was evidence the transmission was failing. The hydraulics in our back latch was dangerous, so when my daughter-in-law’s dad, Pat, wanted to replace it I was happy to pay for the part. Finally, my lovely wife said she didn’t feel safe driving the van and finally I decided it was time. We had a sign that it was time when we took the wrong turn in and had to turn around. *I have a history of making due – “Sometimes it just time to get a different vehicle, Mr. Flaherty.”
 - c. Even though all humans have the same basic problem it looks different on different people.
 - i. What it looks like in Gentiles – idolatry. (Next week)
 - ii. What it looks like in Jews – self-righteous pride. (Two weeks)
 - iii. The next two weeks will be painful but we won’t see the gospel’s answer clearly if we don’t grasp how bad the problem is. We’ll end up fixing our hydraulics instead of completely letting go of the old life and walking in the new life Jesus has for us in His

resurrection. “Seek first all these things and add a little of Jesus on just in case.”

- III. The gospel is heaven’s answer for the human condition.
- a. The answer is a Person who was both human and Divine. *The eternal Son became the begotten Son when He was born of the virgin Mary – a descendant of king David. He came in weakness and died to take away our sins – He rose by the power of God and is now risen and has the power controlling the whole world and world events. Fully God and fully man – God had to visit this planet and die on a cross for you to be saved.
 - b. The answer is all about Him, not us.
 - i. His unconditional love – the gospel is available to everyone. Jews first and then the Gentiles. (Paul hints and what is coming!)
 - ii. His plan – it is limited only to those who believe. A righteousness from God has been revealed but can only be imputed by faith.
 - iii. His power – not human performance, but Divine grace. From faith to faith; from first to last – not just beginning by faith, but living by faith. *The gospel doesn’t just free us from prison and say, “now you’re on your own”; it gives us a new identity and a new life with a new purpose. Not just imputed righteousness to get us to heaven; imparted righteousness, so that we can live godly lives right now.
 - c. Unashamed – Tim Keller – the same word as unoffended. How is the gospel offensive:
 - i. Intellectual offense – 1 Corinthians 1:18 “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” God speaks into darkness and chaos and when we believe we are saved – I wouldn’t do it that way – it’s too simplistic. You aren’t God – it’s simple enough for a child and profound enough that theologians can plummet its depths. His judgments are unsearchable but His will is discernible.
 - ii. Moral offense:
 - 1. To the humanist – I’m a good person and just need to release the goodness in me. The idea that I’m broken and need to be saved is unnecessary and offensive.
 - 2. To the religious – My performance and effort is good enough – God would never condemn a person who tries hard. Romans 10:3 NIV “Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.” They stumble over Christ – the ground is level at the cross.

- d. The opposite of ashamed is not willing, but eager. (Tim Keller) The love of God for humanity makes us eager to share. *Robert's story.