

Book of Romans
Introduction (1:1-7)
The Obedience of Faith
April 21, 2024

Announcements:

- Mother Daughter Tea Party
- Men's Retreat

Welcome to the book of Romans!

- Today as we kick off Paul's most famous letter I want to set up the trajectory of this sermon series.
- This series will take us well into the Fall, and I encourage you to read through this book in one setting, several times as we journey through verse-by-verse.
- As we go through you will see that we aren't going to let any moss grow under our feet.
- **Here's why:** Romans is one of the most brilliant examples of rhetorical/persuasive writing, one that could be argued framed and formed the foundational virtues of Christian society.
- This book was used for centuries as the premier case study in legal rhetoric, Paul does so in large sweeping arguments that must be taken as a whole.
 - So, because of this, we are developing this series to take in as much of these arguments as we can in one sitting.
 - This is so that we don't run the risk of "missing the forest, for the trees"

Paul begins the book by setting up the trajectory of his arguments so that everyone knows where we are headed in the pages ahead.

Let's jump in...

Romans 1:1-7

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus,...

- There were several types of indentured servitude that one could have found themselves in, in the first century.
- One of those was a bond-servant. This was someone who willingly put themselves under the authority and care of their Master and they were in a sense "adopted" into their

family. Even eligible to receive an inheritance if they never had any biological children, often those children were obligated to take care of them.

- They would pierce their ear, which was called the circumcision of the ear. Marking them as having given themselves to their Master.
- This is how Paul saw his relationship with Christ.
 - And so should we.

...called as an apostle,...

- An apostle is one who is sent out as an ambassador.
- Paul was that ambassador, just like Abraham's bond-servant was sent out to find a wife for Issac from their homeland, Paul is sent out to gather in the bride of Christ, and make her ready for His glorious return.
- This is the good news of God for which Paul was set apart...we stand on the shoulders of the apostles as we continue to be ambassadors of Christ, calling all people to repent and turn to Christ.

...set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; 7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Our Mission is to be God's ambassadors, declaring the Lordship of Jesus Christ to all the nations, inviting them to turn from their idols and reliance on self, and turn to Christ who is the only means of salvation and eternal glory.
- We know that this is the overarching purpose of the letter because Paul reminds us of this when he wraps his letter 16 pages later.

Romans 16:25-27

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

- Paul wraps up the way he started to make sure we don't get distracted from the main purpose for which he is writing this letter.
- Our mission is not just to get people saved, our mission is to help everyone walk in right relationship God in Jesus Christ.

The Goal: Obedience of Faith.

- There is a difference between obedience of faith and obedience of works.
- One starts with grace, and then brings our life into alignment with that reality.
- The other starts with bringing our life into alignment with a reality so that we might be righteous.

What we will see as we journey through this book is that...

Our Theology Impacts Our Practice.

- Romans Chapters 1-11 makes up Paul's theological case.
- Romans Chapters 12-16 apply these theological truths to our lives.
- Orthodoxy leads to Orthopraxy.
 - How we think about God and others will always impact how we relate to God and others.
- Many come to Romans from a theological and soteriological perspective.
- Others simply take a more practical approach.
- We want to stay true to Paul's overall strategy and see the interplay between each.
- Which is finding ourselves fully in the life of God.
- The Obedience of Faith is the bond of a living union with Jesus Christ, and so the obedience of faith arises out of union with Him:
 - "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5).
- Paul says in Gal 2:20, "The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" God calls us to a life of faith, not just a moment of faith, or to a decision of faith.
 - That which God does in that moment of faith, we then live out as we walk by faith.

- The obedience of faith is very different from the obedience of works. The obedience of works is an effort that you have to find within yourself. But the obedience of faith arises from your living union with Christ.
- Christ came to save His people from their sins. That means He came to make obedience possible. He is able to deliver you from the power of sin. That deliverance will be complete in heaven. But what He completes in heaven, He begins now. The obedience of faith is about pursuing in the power of Christ, now, an obedience that will be complete, by the grace of Christ, then.
- God does not call you to obey, so that you can come to Christ. He calls you to come to Christ, so that you can obey.

Romans 5:19 NASB95 - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

The goal is right relationship with God and others.

We were made to be in relationship with our creator, and to join Him in His ruling and reigning over all of creation.

- We will never find satisfaction outside of fulfilling this purpose.

Two primary points to keep in mind as we journey through Romans.

1. How we enter this relationship: Justification by Faith in Christ Alone

- The grounds of our justification before God is necessarily the obedience of Jesus Christ, the perfect man.
 - This obedience is imputed to the believer, and the sole instrument for receiving this imputation of righteousness is faith in Christ.
 - This is the gracious gift of God delivered to us in Christ Jesus, and is the sole means of salvation.
 - Jesus, as the second Adam, lived a perfect sinless life, and became the only one worthy of taking the penalty of sin on himself.

2. This opens the door for us to turn to God and live in right relationship with God and others.

What does God want?

- He wants a family. And he wants all people to be part of that family.

Our oneness in Christ is paramount to our testimony to the world. We have a commission, meaning, we are doing this with God.

God's plan, from the very beginning, was for all people, from every tribe and tongue and nation, to be part of His family in Christ Jesus.

- This was the mystery hidden from ages past.
- This is the very heart of God from the moment He created man and women in His image.
- That the beauty of the nations would be gathered under the headship of Christ, the Lord of all Creation.

But this mission is hindered when we don't live in right relationship with God and others. When we don't understand God's heart, and in particular God's heart for others.

*****The Big Problem in the Roman Church.**

- **One group saw themselves superior to the other.**
 - Historical Background.
 - Jewish Christian believed they were superior because of their law righteousness.
 - The Gentile Christians, believed God had rejected the Jewish people and had now turned to them.
- The same can be true for us today...we spend so much time worrying about being right that we forget about being righteous.
- The mission is not having the right knowledge it is loving God and others.

Luke 15:1-3

1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. 2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He told them this parable, saying,...

Luke 15:11-32

11 And He said, "A man had two sons. 12 "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. 13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14 "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 "So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 "And he would have gladly

filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. 17 "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" 20 "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate. 25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 "And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. 29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' 31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

This is the tale of two sons.

- **The ingathering of the nations was the plan all along.**
- **Not to obedience of the Law, but to the obedience of Faith.**
 - **The job of the Law is to show us what righteousness and obedience looks like. Not to make us righteous.**
 - **Christ is our righteousness, we are all in the same boat, all in desperate need of a Savior.**
 - **Jew, gentile, slave, free, male, female. Whatever means you want to use to divide up and separate humanity.**
 - **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**
 - **The only question that remains is, “where is your heart?”**

Which son are you?

- The younger son, just setting out on your journey.
- The younger son, in the midst of the selfish and worthless revelry.
- The younger son, broken, destitute and reaping the ramification of your own sin.
- The older son, bitter and caught up in your own self-righteousness.
- The older son, weary of doing good.

This book is for all of us.

Communion

Romans 16:25-27

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.