

Studies in Romans

Paul and the People of Rome (1:8-15)

Review

The purpose of Romans

What are the three precise reasons why Paul wrote his letter to the Romans?

Key purpose:

The overarching goal in this letter is to glorify God.

“The purpose of Romans is the glory of God seen in a united missionary church humbled together under grace” (Christopher Ash).

Context

Romans 1:1-17 is the opening “frame” or section of the letter and the introduction simply divides up into three parts:

1. **vv. 1-7** Greeting (from: Paul, to: the Roman Christians)
2. **vv. 8-15** Relationship (the background: Paul’s gospel commitment to the Roman Christians)
3. **vv. 16-17** Manifesto (key verses: God’s powerful saving gospel)

Paul’s greeting (1:1-7)

We noted how Paul turned a greeting section into his first teaching point. We saw that Paul (a servant of Christ Jesus and one called to be an apostle) was set apart by Christ himself to carry the gospel of God. And the gospel is what Paul introduces us to in those opening verses.

What does Paul say about the gospel in vv. 1-6? (Example: it comes from God...)

⁷ *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.*

Paul’s Relationship to the Roman Christians (1:8-15)

*How would you describe **the tone** of this section (vv. 8-15)? Is it any different to the vv. 1-7?*

Note the ongoing theme of “**all**” – **vv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15**. *Why this emphasis?*

Notice too, **the emphasis on faith...**

1. Paul prays for them (1:8-10)

How would you describe Paul’s prayer for the Romans?

a. God’s praise (v. 8)

The Christian is to be a thankful person! Michael Eaton notes that thankfulness arises out of an assurance of salvation. See **Rom. 8:15**.

Paul prays “through Jesus Christ.” *What does that mean?*

What Paul is particularly thankful for? See also **Philippians 1:29** and **2 Peter 1:1**.

Notice as well how amazing it was that their faith was “proclaimed in all the world.”

b. God’s people (v. 9)

“For” – transition into this next theme: Paul’s prayer to visit Rome.

“serve in my spirit”? Paul’s wholehearted service (*latreuo*) in the gospel with his whole being. Paul’s thanksgiving to God for them and his desire to visit them are in his service of the gospel as an apostle.

c. God’s providence (v. 10)

“...always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

Verses 10-13 give us a glimpse of how the guidance of God worked out in Paul’s life on this particular occasion and there are a number of principles here:

Paul was praying.

Guidance can be a very difficult matter.

God doesn’t always give us clear, direct answers about things.

There’s nothing wrong with having ordinary human desires for God’s kingdom. See also **Psalm 37:4; 1 Kings 3:5** (noting **vv. 3 & 4**). Augustine: “Love God then do whatever you want!”

It’s not wrong to make plans. *How do we reconcile this with James 4:13-15?*

Take note of where God is already moving and working in your life.

Look at Paul’s plans a bit closer:

2. Paul is planning to see them (1:11-15)

Looking at vv. 11-15, what are the reasons why Paul hopes to be allowed by God to come to Rome?

a. _____ (v. 11-12)

b. _____ (v. 13)

c. Paul is eager to _____ (vv. 14-15)

God's Powerful Saving Gospel (1:16-17)

Here we see Paul's main theme. This is a summary of his letter that Paul will go on to develop in detail. It also explains why Paul feels "bound" to the Gentiles and why he's so eager to preach the gospel to the Romans.

"For" – linking word, linking vv. 16-17 up with v. 15. So make sure you see this as a chain of logical thought which explains the reason for Paul's ministry.

¹⁶ **For** *I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

¹⁷ **For** *in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed
from faith for faith,
as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

Catch the logical thought: *why is Paul eager to preach the gospel (v. 15)?*

Because ("for") – he's _____. See **2 Tim. 1:8**.

Continue the logical thought: *why isn't Paul ashamed of the gospel?*

Because ("for") "_____"

Then thirdly, *why is the gospel the power of God to rescue?*

Because ("for") _____.

We're going to have to ask some questions of these verses:

1. What is "the righteousness of God"?
2. What's Paul mean by saying God's righteousness "is revealed" in the gospel?
3. Why is it "from faith to faith"?
4. Since Paul is quoting from the Old Testament, from the prophet Habakkuk, how does the Old Testament quotation help us understand what he's saying here?

For further thought and discussion

- In **verse 13** Paul wants to come to Rome and minister to them in order that he might “reap some harvest” among them. *Why is this surprising in the light of v. 8? What are the implications there for us?*
- *Why might someone be ashamed of the gospel? What issues are at stake here? What might we be afraid of?*
- *What is it about the gospel which makes Paul preach it unashamedly?*
- *How can Paul’s teaching about the gospel help us in our evangelism? In what areas does our thinking most need to be changed?*