

Romans – Justified through faith

Week 1 – Introduction

Romans has two main themes entwined in the ministry of reconciliation.

- (1) The justification of guilty sinners by “God’s grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone.”
- (2) Reconstitution and reconciliation of the people of God both Jews and Gentiles. Belonging to God is no longer dependant upon your ancestry or culture but is according to faith in Jesus.

Paul is probably writing the letter to the Romans while in Corinth. He mentions three places he wants to visit, Jerusalem, Rome and then Spain. He longs to visit Jerusalem because of his continuing commitment to the welfare of Israel; he wants to visit Spain because of his calling as the Apostle to the Gentiles (he’s been everywhere else!) He wants to visit Rome for mutual encouragement and blessing. The letter is in preparation for this longed for visit and to establish his credentials as he hadn’t been there before.

The Roman church is a mixture of Jews and Gentiles (probably mostly Gentile) and there was friction between the two groups because of their conflicting views on Jewish law versus freedom. Both appear arrogant and Paul humbles them both.

Chapter 1: 1-6

The word ‘servant’ is more accurately translated ‘slave’. Paul’s denotes his own humility and personal insignificance, he is owned by Jesus. Yet Paul acknowledging his Apostleship means he’s been given a huge responsibility to receive, formulate, defend, maintain and proclaim the gospel.

Paul follows this with his six point summary of the gospel.

1. The origin of the gospel is God
It’s God’s own good news for the world; it’s not man’s idea.
2. The evidence of the gospel is scripture.
The good news was promised throughout the Old Testament – there’s continuity in what Paul says and what was promised through the prophets.

Quotes about the book of Romans

“A manifesto of freedom through Jesus Christ”
- John Stott

“Really the chief part of the New Testament and truly the purest gospel”
- Luther

“It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word by heart, but that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul.”
- Luther

3. The substance of the gospel is Jesus Christ
 “Everything must be understood in relation to Christ” – Luther
 Jesus was human *and* divine.

4. The scope of the Gospel is all the nations
 The gospel is for *everybody*

5. The purpose of the Gospel is the obedience of faith
 You cannot have salvation without following (obeying) Jesus. This is the response the gospel demands. The Lordship of Jesus means a lifetime of obedience, total and unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ.

6. The goal of the gospel is the honour of Christ’s name
 We should be jealous for the honour of His name; troubled when it remains unknown, hurt when it is ignored, indignant when blasphemed, and all the time anxious and determined that it should receive the honour and glory it is due.

“The highest of all missionary motives is ... zeal – burning and passionate zeal- for the glory of Christ” – Stott

It’s the gospel of God about Jesus Christ according to scripture for the nations unto the obedience of faith and for the sake of the name!

Questions

1. Does the gospel have to be spoken?

2. Why do we struggle preaching the gospel?

Quotes about the book of Romans

“I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.”

- John Wesley upon hearing Luther’s *Preface to Romans* being read at a Moravian meeting.

Will you be inspired to wrestle with the Lord this week until your understanding of the gospel is deeper in your heart and closer to your mind?

Memory Verse:

And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:6