

## FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE

Romans 1:1-17  
Key Verse 1:17

Lesson 1

"For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

### 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ (1)

Paul had been a servant of sin and a servant of the law. He said in 7:14, 'I am ... sold as a slave to sin.' And in 6:16 he said, 'Don't you know that you are slaves to the one whom you obey? He knew that no one lives in neutral territory. He had been a slave to sin; now he was a slave of Jesus Christ. He was writing to those who are >also among those called to belong to Jesus Christ. (6) A slave does not act on his own; he watches the movements of his master and listens to the voice of his master. He does not act according to his own will or ideas. What he does reflects the will and purpose of the one to whom he belongs. We must not live in the grey and sticky slough of 'no commitments'-- for this is living a lie. We must live as servants of Jesus Christ. This means that I must do his will, not mine; I must be sensitive to what pleases him; I must do his business, not my own. Abraham's servant was such a servant. He did his master's work as if it were his own. He gave his whole heart to the mission his master had given him. (See 1:9)

### 2. Grace and apostleship

Paul was called to be an apostle. He had been an enemy of God; but through Jesus Christ's one-sided grace, he had been delivered from bondage to sin, forgiven, and he had been given a precious mission. This mission was also God's grace. In 15:16, Paul speaks of the grace God gave me 'to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.' In 1 Corinthians 15:9,10 he says, 'For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' God's grace to every sinner is the grace of forgiveness and the grace of becoming a useful person in God's redemptive history. He created each of us for a purpose and his gracious salvation restores purpose and meaning to our lives. Ephesians 2:10 says, 'For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'

### 3. For his name's sake

Paul was called and sent as missionary for the sake of Jesus' name. His mission did not start with man's need, but with God's sovereignty. He went to call men to obedience so that God m

ight be glorified. When all men everywhere repent and turn to God to obey him and serve him, t he creation order will be restored; God will be glorified, man will be saved and all creation will b e full of beauty and peace. The gospel itself glorifies God, for it reveals his hatred of sin and his love for sinful, fallen mankind. So when the gospel is rightly proclaimed, God is glorified. Man' s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Our purpose in life and in mission must be t o glorify God. All people must live and work for the sake of his name.

#### 4. To call people from among all the Gentiles

Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles. He was sent to those outside the circle of God's peop le--to the pagan world. He was a missionary. Rome was the center of the Gentile world. Paul ha d never seen Rome, but he was very eager to go there. He prayed for the Christians in Rome dail y (10). He wanted to preach the gospel there. He wanted the church in Rome to have missionary vision based on the gospel. Because of the grace Paul had received from God, he felt a great obl igation, a debt to the whole Gentile world. (14)

#### 5. To the obedience that comes from faith

Jesus commanded his disciples to make disciples. They were instructed by Jesus not only to make converts, but to teach the new believers to obey the commands of Jesus. (Mt 28:19,20) Paul said that his mission was to call people to the obedience that comes from faith. He was call ed to be a disciple-maker. He trained men to obey God's word, to be Jesus' disciples. God wants our faith to be not just in our heads, but to be in our hands and feet, to be reflected in our practic al lives as well. So we must be trained in obedience by the word of God.

When we receive God's gospel by faith, we have new life in Jesus Christ. God's children are saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus, so that we may live by faith. People without Go d live by their human reason or by feelings or by watching and imitating other people. But to live by faith means to study God's word and pray and allow God's Holy Spirit to lead us step by step. It is important for Christians to challenge pagan culture by lives of faith.

#### 6. The Gospel

Faith is not a vague thing. Faith means faith in the living God, our Creator. Faith means accepting God's gospel. Verse 1 says that the gospel is God's gospel. What is the gospel?

The gospel is Jesus Christ, our Lord. He is God's Son. He was also a perfect man. He is the Messiah, descended from King David. His Sonship and his deity are declared and attested by his resurrection.

The gospel is imbedded in history. And history witnesses to the faithfulness of God, to th e truthfulness and authenticity of the gospel. God promised the gospel beforehand to Abraham. ( Ge 12:2, 3) The prophets prophesied about this gospel. God kept his promise and fulfilled all the

prophecies when he sent his Son to be our Savior. The good news is that we have forgiveness of sin through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and new life and heavenly hope through his resurrection from the dead.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes. The power of the gospel is the almighty power of God, Creator of heaven and earth. The power that changes sinners into saints is the resurrection power of Jesus, applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit. This power is released by faith--and only by faith. There is no sinner so terrible that he cannot be saved by faith in this gospel. The gospel is sufficient to solve the fundamental life problem of any person.

In the gospel God reveals his righteousness. God is Sovereign. He is holy. He hates sin and loves sinners. He makes sinners righteous by forgiving our sins. But his forgiveness is not cheap. It cost God his very heart--the life-blood of his only Son. Jesus on the cross shows us the perfection of God's righteousness and the measureless depth of God's love.

By faith from first to last. Righteousness is defined as a right relationship with God. When God forgives sinners who repent and believe the gospel, he adopts them into his family. We Christians are sinners who have been forgiven, and who, by God's grace, have a right relationship with God. This relationship begins when we believe in Jesus. It continues as we continue to walk by faith--that is, as we continue to trust and obey God. It continues until we claim our heavenly inheritance; it continues forever. This phrase is also translated 'from faith to faith.' Faith produces faith. When we act in faith, faith grows. As our faith grows, we grow in our knowledge and love of God, and in our obedience to him. Abraham's faith was like this. For in the gospel righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (17)