

# Romans 1:8-17

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[ 0 : 00 ] But take the Bible you have with you and turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1. This morning we will be in verses 8 through 17.

I get asked this quite a bit, and while you're turning there, I'll go ahead and let you all know. Many ask me from time to time what translation of Scripture I preach from.

I don't always announce that. I know some churches will have it behind the pastor so that you can read. Maybe we need to begin doing that. I preach from the New American Standard, NASB.

That's my Bible of choice for study. It's my Bible of choice for preaching. For many years I preached from the New King James and began to see that I had a pretty wide variety of Scripture across the congregation that I was preaching at.

I had many with NIV, some with the CEV, just different translations. So I began to prayerfully consider changing translations. Now for a preacher, that's hard to do because you have read so many verses in one translation publicly, and then you begin to do it again.

[ 1 : 15 ] I still find myself at times reverting back to the way things always read for me. So through a lot of prayer and through a lot of study and a lot of looking at different translations, I went with the one nobody was using.

No, I didn't do that intentionally. I went with the New American Standard because it is a literal word-for-word translation of the Greek. I have my reasons, and I don't mind talking to you about that.

It's not a Bible translation study, so I'm not getting into that. But that's what I preach from. Some of you say, well, I have a hard time following you. I understand that. You don't find very many of them on bookstores.

They're not widely used, but there are a lot of study Bibles. John MacArthur uses the New American Standard. Charles Stanley uses the New American Standard. I'm pretty sure James MacDonald uses the New American Standard.

There's a lot more. Tony Evans, I think, uses the New American Standard. I found all those out afterwards. They came after me. I think they heard my sermons, and they said, hey, that Bible sounds pretty good. I'm joking, guys, okay? These are guys I hear on the radio.

[ 2 : 18 ] They never hear me. But it is beginning to grow in popularity, but that's what I use. We're in Romans 1, verses 8 through 17 this morning.

If you are physically able and desire to do so, I ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God from the great book of Romans, the first chapter, starting in verse 8.

The Word of God says, First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making requests, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, and that you may be established. That is, that I may be encouraged together with you, while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you, and have been prevented so far, so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

[ 3 : 31 ] I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

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. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, but the righteous man shall live by faith.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we praise you for the opportunity we have to open up your word. We pray, O Lord, that your word would capture our attention, that it would lay hold of our heart and mind.

Lord, that it would draw us closer to you than we have ever been. And Lord, by being in your presence, we would be transformed to walk in your likeness in the world in which you have planted us. And we ask it all, and we look forward to it all.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. Last week, we had the glorious opportunity of beginning our study through the book of Romans. I introduced the book of Romans to you as being probably my favorite book in all of Scripture.

[ 4 : 43 ] Not because I find it the easiest to understand, but because it is the very book that while studying it and reading through it on my own, I came to the salvation knowledge of Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

Rather than just trying to keep myself out of hell, I came to the realization that I needed a Lord, I needed a Savior, and I found Him like so many others through the very Word of God.

I was challenged to read the book of Romans and see what it is that it has to say about salvation. And while doing so, God gripped my heart. He changed my life, and He transformed me into His glory.

He showed me my need for Him, and He showed me the way to Him. He has not only done that for me, He's done that through a number throughout the ages in this very book. It has been called the chief book of church doctrine in all of history.

More doctrines and beliefs of the church are based upon an interpretation of the book of Romans than any other part of Scripture. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the Gospels which tell us about the life of Christ.

[ 5 : 46 ] Then we have the book of Acts that tell us about the actions of the early church because of the life of Christ. And in starting in the book of Romans, we are met with what are called the church epistles, which take us all the way through to the book of Revelations.

Paul wrote more of the church epistles than any other author. He wrote more letters to local churches. But the epistles don't talk to us about the life of Christ.

The epistles don't talk to us about what the church is doing because of the life of Christ. The epistles lay out for us what it is the church and the believers believe because of who Jesus Christ is.

By the time we come to the book of Romans, we ought to have already understood that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, having died on the cross for our sins and raised on the third day to live in the newness of life forevermore.

That He has already ascended unto the Father and has taken a seat at the right hand of the Father. That He daily lives to make intercession for us. And friends, that knowledge should radically transform our lives.

[ 6 : 51 ] It is called doctrine and theology, which is how we live out what we believe. Because quite simply, if you don't live out what you believe, then you really don't believe what you claim to believe.

Belief is always rooted in living. That is the only way that we can clearly say it. Romans is such a magnificent book. It is the greatest work of Paul.

It is his magnum opus. It can be defined in three sections. I've kind of laid it out there for you. Sections 1 through 8 tell us literally what the first verses 16 and 17 here say.

How a man can be saved. Chapters 1 through 8 tell us about the problems of man and the solution to man's problems. He introduces us to a man that is not worth looking at.

A man that has fallen short. A man that even though he tries to do his best cannot attain perfection. A man that cannot work his way to heaven and is without hope. And then that man is interrupted by the perfection of Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 55 ] Chapters 1 through 8 deal with the salvation problem. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 deal with the national problem. That is, if God is saving all men, then what about the nation of Israel?

Because we know the Old Testament says that the nation of Israel is his chosen people. And if God has forgotten about his chosen people and doesn't care about the nation of Israel anymore, then friend, what is to say he won't forget about us later?

Can we really trust him? Because if he's going to forget about those he chose in the past, what if he forgets about us after he's chosen us? What chapters 9, 10, and 11 tell us God hasn't forgotten about his people?

He is faithful to his people, which reminds us he will be faithful to us. Chapters 12 through 16 tell us that since we know he has dealt with the salvation problem, he has dealt with the national problem, now we can talk about the daily living out problem.

If all of these things are true, what then shall we do? But we are now looking here just at the introduction. Because Paul really doesn't get into the salvation problem until chapter 1, verse 19.

[ 8 : 58 ] He takes 17 verses introducing himself. We looked last week at verses 1 through 7 of chapter 1, where Paul says, hey guys, I'm a part of the family, you're a part of the family, my name is Paul and you're believers in Rome.

He introduced himself to the family. We looked how they had all these things in common, putting their faith in the common Savior, being loved by a common Father, coming with a common knowledge, all these wonderful truths that though they had never met, they were as much brothers and sisters in Christ as anyone else.

We saw the reality that Paul did not start the church at Rome, Peter did not start the church at Rome. As a matter of fact, we don't know who started the church at Rome. And isn't that amazing?

That one of the greatest churches in all of Scripture, the letter that was written to the church that changed the activity of just about every other church through all time, nobody knows who started it. Because really, my friend, listen to me.

It's not about who starts what. It's not about who does what. It's not about whose name is on what. It's all about who it is that's doing it. And that's God the Father doing His work. Jesus says that it's His church.

[ 10 : 07 ] The gates of hell will not stop His church. He will build the church. He just chooses to use us every now and then. And we stand in humble adoration and go, Well, praise be to God, who am I?

But He uses me anyhow. And we come now to verses 8 through 17 of chapter 1. And this morning, I want you to see the power of faith.

The power of faith. Because Paul has introduced himself to the believers. And he says, hey, I'm your brother. I'm your fellow laborer. I am one of the family just as you are one of the family.

And he introduces himself to them. And now he begins to talk about the power of their mutual faith. The faith that does things. We are seeing here that Romans are the...

The book of Romans is the foundation for the doctrine of our faith. And he begins right off the bat talking about the power of faith. Number one, I want you to see faith has the power of it that exists in it because it is an evident faith.

[ 11 : 11 ] We see the evidence of faith. It says here in verse 8. For I thank my God through Jesus Christ. He says, first of all, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.

Because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. Paul here, after introducing himself, says, first of all and foremost, my friends, my family, I want you to know, I thank God for you.

I wonder how often we do that. Think about this. Look around. We are surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul thanked God for believers he had never met.

You say, well, that'd be easy to do. Because we don't know the bad and the good about them, right? We just know they're believers. But how much easier it ought to be to thank God for those we do know. He says, before I tell you what my plans are.

He gets all the way to chapter 15 before he says, I want to come to you so that you can support me and send me to Spain. I want to preach the gospel beyond you. But before he asks them for anything, before he tells them his plans, the first thing he says, first of all and foremost, I thank God for you.

[ 12 : 18 ] I'm so thankful for you. I'm so glad for you. Friend, listen to me. What a joy it is to go before the Father and thank God for the brothers and sisters in Christ that we know of.

We can go before the Father and we can try to complain and we can try to grope and we can try to gripe. But God, I think at times I'm so glad he made me a father because it helps me understand things.

There are certain voices that I choose not to listen to. There are certain voices from children, my own children, that I'm like, you know what? I'm just not listening. It's not that I don't hear you because, man, you're whining so loud I could hear you in the next room.

It's just I'm not listening to that. Right? If you want to talk to me, you need to change the tone of voice. You need to change the whining and crying and, oh, I can't. Even on the bus, there are tones I don't listen to.

I tell them all the time, listen, I don't want to hear that. I don't want to hear that because I think God's that way. God says, if you want to come into my presence, first of all, come into my presence with admiration, come into my presence with worship, and come into my presence with thanksgiving.

[ 13 : 23 ] Offer to me the sacrifice of thanksgiving. And one thing that we can thank God for is that we don't have to walk through faith alone. We have brothers and sisters in Christ.

He says, I thank my God for you. And why do I thank God for you? Look at what it says. For your faith is being proclaimed throughout the entire world.

He says, the faith that you have, I've heard about it. Here answers the question for us. Why did Paul even write the letter to the church at Rome? He didn't start it.

Peter didn't start it. Nobody he knew started it. It's not like somebody came back to Paul and said, Paul, man, you ought to see this church we started at Rome. Man, this thing exploded. It took off. He never had that conversation.

As a matter of fact, many biblical historians will tell you that Paul was not writing to one church. He was writing to a multitude of house churches here. That there were churches meeting all throughout the city of Rome itself.

[ 14 : 21 ] They had come into existence because of the message Peter had preached on Pentecost. People from all over Rome were there. They heard the gospel in their own language. They caught fire.

They came to Jerusalem trying to do temple worship. They left going back home doing worship through Jesus Christ. And when they got there, they said, man, somebody else needs to hear about this. Just like you saw in the testimonial video this morning.

I want others to know what I know. And then church started popcorn and popping up everywhere. Churches started multiplying and the word started spreading. And there was all these whispers.

Man, you ought to see what God's doing in Rome. Man, you ought to see the work that's going on in Rome. Man, Paul, have you heard about the churches in Rome? We have some friends of Paul that meet him in the city of Corinth, which is where many people believe he authored this letter.

They were tent makers by trade, just like he was. You know them, Aquila and Priscilla, right? Where did they come from? Rome. And they probably came up to Paul and said, Paul, you ought to see what God is doing in Rome.

[ 15 : 20 ] And if you want to really know if God is doing anything in Rome, why did Aquila and Priscilla ever leave Rome? Because the emperor of Rome said the Christians are getting too much.

I'm going to kick them out of Rome. Fred, you know the church is doing something when the world tries to kick you out. And that's amazing, isn't it? Like I can't have them hanging out in my city. They're making me look bad.

It's time you leave. It's when the world leaves the church alone that the church is in trouble. And they come and they say, Paul, you need to see what's going on in Rome. Now they go back eventually to Rome.

And Paul is writing to these believers. He said, I am so thankful for you. I rejoice in you because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the entire world.

There was a saying in the old days. And the saying was, all roads lead to Rome. It is a saying that is even repeated today, just meaning a number of things.

[ 16 : 14 ] But the saying, all roads lead to Rome was a literal saying in history. Why? Because Rome built the roads. And every road throughout the Roman Empire had one intersecting hub.

And that was the city of Rome. Rome was a city of commerce. It was an empire of trade. It was an empire of travel. It was an empire of military mobility.

And to do that, they made roads. And they paved them. And friend, listen to me. You can drive down some of them today. It is amazing what Rome did with roads.

And that's why the Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews, in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son. Think about this just for a minute, okay? This is so amazing. I remember when this hit me, it just blew my mind away.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth his son. Jesus Christ was born probably somewhere around B.C. 4. I know that kind of messes up our calendar time because we think it ought to be like zero. Because B.C. and A.D. deal with the birth of Christ.

[ 17 : 12 ] But when we went back and studied history, it was probably B.C. 4, okay? The Roman Empire had not been in existence too long. But they had been in existence long enough for Herod the Great to be there doing a number of things.

Herod the Great built aqueduct that brought water to Rome, which they were still using up until the 1940s. Herod the Great also developed underwater concrete. Pretty cool. He developed underwater concrete to build a seaport on the Sea of Galilee because the area of Israel has no natural seaports.

So he built a shipyard and a seaport. And it was into that world that Christ came. And it was into that world where the roads were paved that Christ touched lives. It was into that world that Christ came, died to death, raised to life, walked in the newness of life, redeemed Paul, so that Paul could get on the ships that Herod the Great built the seaport for to take the gospel around the world.

It was into that world that Jesus brought the message that would change the world because now the roads were in place to get on there. Do you see what I'm talking about here? God waited for man to catch up with his plan.

And they said, now that the roads and the seaport are in existence, it's time for me to interrupt so that the gospel can spread throughout the world. And Rome was a strategic city for that.

[ 18 : 29 ] And then in Rome, God began to work. And just like all roads lead to Rome, all roads came from Rome. And what was happening at the church of Rome began to be talked about around the world.

This is why. Because faith, true faith, is always evident, which means it's always seen. It's always witnessed.

It does not say that the church went around boasting. It does not say the church went around beating its own chest. The implication here is that God grabbed a hold of people's lives to such an extent, through the price of Jesus Christ, that people's lives began to change.

People were believing in things they used to not believe in. And other people began to hear about it. See, faith has the power of being evident.

There are a number of things. Oh, God does not call us to walk in blind ignorance. There are a number of things that we can point to throughout time, history, and even in today. We can point to proofs, to the fact and the truths of Christianity.

[ 19 : 35 ] As a matter of fact, I could introduce you to people who would emphatically assert that everything this Bible says is true.

They would tell you that it is historically accurate. They would tell you that it is chronologically correct. They would tell you that what it states is 100% true. And the whole time they tell you that, they would not believe it and accept it.

And they would not be saved individuals. History has shown that man has proven the authenticity of Scripture. It is true. But the greatest testimony to salvation is still the changed lives of the believers.

The greatest testimony to faith is still the changed lives of individuals. You can take people and you can show them facts. And those facts can be denied or even overlooked.

But when you introduce them to somebody who used to be this way, and now all of a sudden they are this way. Who used to go down that road, and now all of a sudden they're going down that road.

[ 20 : 38 ] If you introduce them to a Saul traveling down Damascus Road looking to kill believers, and before he gets to Damascus he is a believer, then friend, all of a sudden people stand up and pay attention.

All of a sudden people acknowledge there is power in faith because faith is evident. Friend, listen to me. The greatest defense and the greatest apologetic you have for what you believe is the faith that you possess.

It is the fact that now that you have faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, your life is different than it used to be. Your life is radically changed. Something about you has changed.

You can now thank God for believers where you used to not even like individuals. You can now rejoice while suffering, while you used to complain about a splinter. You can be something that you never once were because now your faith in Jesus Christ has changed you, and friend, it is evident in you.

What a joy to know the power of faith. It is that it is an evident faith that can be heard about around the world. We see here the evidence of faith.

[ 21 : 44 ] Number two, we see the encouragement of faith. Paul says, I pray for you. All daily I'm praying for you. I wonder how long it's been since you've read the letters of Paul.

Myself, I'm reading the letters of Paul, and I'm going through them again. I'm in 2 Corinthians, one of his letters in my daily reading. And Paul begins to talk about all the things he's suffered there. It's a powerful chapter.

Paul says, I've been shipwrecked. I've been left for dead. I've been stoned. I've been beaten. I've been thrown to the wild beast. I've been hungry. All these things I have suffered.

And then there's this line in there I have it underlined in my scripture. And he says, and besides all this, the worst thing is the daily concern for the church.

He says, for who is weak without me being weak? You want to know the prayer life in the heart of Paul? Paul said, when you're weak in the faith, I'm weak with you. Man, it burdens me. When you're strong in the faith, I'm strong with you.

[ 22 : 43 ] Man, it burdens me. You want me to show you what the hardest part of pastoring is? And I don't mean to say this. I'm only looking for the empathy or anything like this. You can see it in scripture. The hardest part of pastoring is not the time. It's not the study.

It's not the effort. It's not the phone ringing. It's not. It is the concern for the church. For who is weak without me being weak? It is the concern of, when you're not here, you might just not be here.

But I'm concerned about you. And I'll lay awake all night thinking about you. And I'll be worried about you. And I'll be concerned about you. And I have a heart for you because that's what God has given me. Paul has this for the Romans that he does not know.

He says, I'm praying for you. I'm lifting you up. He says, and I'm asking God. Look at what it says. We're talking about the encouragement here. He says, in verse 9, Now, look at verse 10.

This is so important. Always in my prayers, making requests. If perhaps now, at last, by the will of God, I may succeed in coming to you. Paul says, I'm not going to come when I want to come.

[ 23 : 52 ] I want to come when God wants me to come. And I'm saying, oh, God, would you let me go there? Oh, God, would you let me go to Rome? Oh, God, would I be there for those believers? Oh, God, would you send me there?

Listen, God sends him there, but it's in the ship bound as a prisoner, right? We see that in the book of Acts, and he goes on. For I long to see you, so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, and that you may be established.

Verse 12, that is, that I may be encouraged together with you, while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. Here it is, the encouragement of faith.

You want to know why Paul wanted to get there so bad? Paul said, I can't wait to come. Oh, I long to be there. I want to see you. I'm praying all day, every day.

God, let me go to Rome. He said, because I want to encourage you. He says, more than that, I want to be encouraged by you. Think about this.

[ 24 : 50 ] This is Paul. I mean, this isn't like John Mark, right? The one who got tired, got scared, and went back home. This isn't like Thomas, doubting Thomas. You know, we all give him a bad rap, but history shows that Thomas ended up taking the gospel into Africa, too.

Or Ethiopia. It's not even that. This is Paul. This is like, you know, I'm walking across this mountain, taking the gospel over there, Paul. This is like, they stoned me, left me for dead in Lystra.

I got up the next day and went back into Lystra, Paul. This is a guy who has been through it all. This is a man who God stood beside him. This is a man who saw the angels break the chains off his feet.

And he says, I can't wait to get to you so that I can encourage you and you can encourage me. Why? Because people of faith are an encouragement to one another. Oh, how encouraged we are through the faith of others.

You ever thought about why it's so amazing to hear the testimony of someone else? It's not because it gives us goosebumps. It's not because that's a cool story. Because, you know, you can go to the world and hear cool stories. You can go to the world and hear all kinds of things, right?

[ 25 : 59 ] And I'm not against cool stories. And I read some of them because I think they're amazing. But it's not that you just want to hear something. It's not that you want to be entertained. The reason it is so powerful to hear the testimony of someone else and the reason why it is so necessary for you to share your testimony is because testimonies are proclamations of faith, of this is what God has done.

And that is an encouragement to someone else. Somebody may be sitting in the room who has questions that only your testimony can answer. Somebody may be sitting in the room who has doubts, whose faith is beginning to waver just a little bit, who seems to be tottering back and forth, and they need to be undergirded and encouraged by the faith of someone else.

Maybe it's your hug. Maybe it's your handshake. Maybe it's a simple gesture of kindness. I don't know what it is, but I do know this, that when the Bible tells us to forsake not the assembling together of one another, it's not because the preachers were concerned about filling their pews.

It's because they knew that they needed one another's faith to encourage them to go back into the world in which they live. It is the understanding that we cannot walk this life of faith on our own, that we cannot live too long on our faith by ourselves.

Rather, we must be encouraged by someone else. And my friend, listen, if Paul needed to be encouraged by the other believers, how much more we do. How much more us.

[ 27 : 24 ] Paul caught up into the third heavens and saw things he couldn't even talk about. Paul spent three years in the wilderness of Arabia, meeting with Christ, being taught.

Literally, he went to the College of Jesus Christ, right? He graduated from the school of Gamaliel, and that was nothing. That was like the Harvard of his day. And he was like, that was pretty cool. But the good education, that was in the wilderness for three years where Jesus taught me.

That was some cool stuff, you know? Because Jesus created Gamaliel. So whatever Gamaliel knew, Jesus knew more than that. That was pretty cool. This guy says, I need to meet with you, young believers, to be encouraged by you.



And I need to encourage you. Friend, listen, none of us have ever went so far in the faith that we don't need someone else. I have found that even the youngest, newest believer can be such an encouragement to some of us who have been in the faith for a while.

As a matter of fact, I find them great encouragement. I love it when a new believer comes in their own fire, and I tell them, I say, don't let anybody throw any water on your fire. You let your fire burn. And you get around some of these others and see if the fire on you won't spread to them.

[ 28 : 28 ] And let's see if we can't all catch fire because somebody else encourages us. How amazing it is that the power of faith is that we can be in mutual encouragement to one another.

Paul says, I need to come to you. Man, I need you. Do you know what he does when he first gets to Rome? Do you remember that? We went through the book of Acts. Remember, he's there, he's on a ship, he's on his way to Rome.

He ends up being shipwrecked at the island of Malta. He's there, he spends some time there at the island of Malta. He comes in and he gets to this place called Three Inns, there at the end of the book of Acts. He is there and it says the church comes out to meet him at Three Inns and they walk with him the next 60 miles to the city of Rome.

Do you think that they weren't encouraging him then? Paul, you know you're about to die in Rome, but we want to walk with you for 60 miles. Sometimes it's good to have somebody walking with us.

The power of faith is that you don't have to know everything. You don't have to understand everything. You just have to have faith in the same one I have faith in and you can be an encouragement to me and I can be an encouragement to you.

[ 29 : 32 ] Here we see these two great truths. We see the evidence of faith, the encouragement of faith. Number three, stay with me because this one is so important. The expectation of faith. The expectation of faith.

Paul writes here, There you go again. He said, Here's the first expectation.

Paul expected to be fruitful. How many of you this week expect to be fruitful for the Lord? How many of you, when you leave here, you know that God is going to give you divine encounters all week long?

That God's going to put somebody in your path that needs to be encouraged, somebody in your path that needs to know him as their Savior? How many of us really expect God to use us this week? Or do you just expect God to sustain us?

Jesus says, I am the vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me, you will bear fruit. That's an expectation. You will. And Jesus says, You will bear fruit. And he says, If you don't bear fruit, I'll prune you so you'll bear more fruit. Some of us go through pruning processes.

[ 30 : 38 ] That's okay. But the expectation is this. When I get there, I'm going to be fruitful. And the expectation every believer ought to have is that we are going to be fruitful for the kingdom.

I expect God to call someone from this congregation into the ministry. I expect God to call people out of our fellowship and out of our church into the mission field. I expect God to redeem individuals and to set them free from addictions they never thought they could.

I expect God to gloriously set you and I free from things that we never thought we could. I expect God to redeem souls that walked into the door every week. I expect God to do something.

Because he said he would. And I have yet to find a time where when God says he would do something, that he didn't do something. And if we lived our lives in the glorious expectation, this week God's going to use you.

Friend, listen to me. It is not a matter of can he use you. He can use a rooster to talk to Peter and he can use a donkey to talk to Balaam. God could use a donkey and a rooster. Surely he could use us, right?

[ 31 : 40 ] I've seen chickens. They got chicken brains, right? I know a whole lot of donkeys. We don't even want to talk about that. But listen, if he can use them, he can use us. And I expect him to use you this week.

God's going to put somebody in your path he wants to love through you. God's going to put somebody in your path he wants you to send a message to. We live in a day of communication like never before. You want to tell somebody you're thinking about them, praying for them, you don't have to write a letter like Paul and give it to somebody to run it all the way to Rome.

You can pull out the computer that's in your pocket and send a message and it'll tell you if it's delivered or not. That's amazing, right? Boom, it's there. Some of us have it, notifications turned on. You send it to me, you know when I read it. Because I don't mind you knowing if I read it or not.

He read that at 804. He ain't responding yet. Why ain't he responding yet? Or it used to amaze me. This whole iPhone thing, like, oh, they're typing. I remember Hunter got one first time. He's like, well, they're responding right now. They're typing. How do you know that?

I mean, you got eyes over there or something? But then I figured I caught up, right? But it's amazing. You can encourage people now in the blink of an eye. And I expect God's going to put somebody on your heart.

[ 32 : 43 ] The only question is, are you expecting it? Paul says, when I get there, I'm going to bear fruit. Because God's called me to be fruitful. God's called me to be encouraging.

And I'm going to be there. And I'm going to be fruitful. And he goes on. He says, why? Because I am under obligation both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. Greeks were considered your high class.

People that were Greek society, they were the intellectuals. They were the Aristotles. They were the Epicurus. They were the people who thought. They were the people who, the thinkers, Greek thinkers. I don't know how much Greek stuff you've read. I haven't read a whole lot.

It's still Greek to me. But, man, it is like, they thought about things that were just weird. You know, they would just spend their days thinking about things. But they also, a lot of these Greek thinkers, they thought about eternal things.

They just didn't know the answer to them. I think it was J. Sidlule Baxter who once said, no longer do we measure our days, no longer do we measure our life by the calendar, rather we measure them by the hour.

[ 33 : 42 ] But back when people measured their lives by the calendar, they had time to think about the eternal. But now that we measure them by the hour and even the minute, we don't even think about the temporal. Think about that for a minute.

Why do you read the old books? Because when somebody wrote something a long time ago, they had time to think about it before they wrote it. Okay? Listen, Paul says, I'm coming to you because I'm under obligation.

Greeks, high society. Barbarians, literally, were the people who said, bar, bar. Their speech was all messed up. Their speech wasn't right. They kind of had an accent. I got an accent. Okay?

Now it's kind of diluted a little bit because of the stuff that I've got going on. But I've heard myself on recording. There is no doubt. I'm from the South. My name is Billy Joe. If I looked any different than I did, if my name was any different, it would just be messed up.

Right? I have an accent. I am what I am. Maybe I'm the barbarian. I'm the bar, bar guy. I don't know. But he says, I'm there for the wise and the unwise. I'm there for all people. I'm there to minister to everybody.

[ 34 : 40 ] He said, I am under obligation. Friend, let's go ahead. I'm trying to wrap it up. You too are under obligation because you have been redeemed. You have been purchased with the precious blood of the Lamb. God has bought you.

He has redeemed you from the Master who used to hold you captive, which is Satan. And you are under obligation. And you need to live an obligated life. You are obligated to expect God to do something.

So for my part, I'm eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. Verse 15. And here it is. Verses 16 and 17. He says, Man, I want to preach. He says, I'm ready to preach.

I can't wait to preach. Why? 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.

Here's an expectation. He expected to preach. And when he preached, he expected people to be saved. He says, When somebody hears the gospel, I expect God to set them free.

[ 35 : 37 ] Salvation there. The literal word for salvation is to snatch someone away from great danger. He says, It is the power of God to snatch people away from the danger of their souls.

And I expect him to do that. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Here it is. The power of faith. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written.

But the righteous man shall live by faith. Here's an expectation of faith. You start with faith. You walk by faith. You live by faith. And you end in faith. And the faith is this.

That God will do what God said he would do. For in it, the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. Wednesday night crowd, you heard this already.

I'll tell you to again. Some of you haven't heard it. The righteousness of God is a very powerful word. And I'm closing here. Because this is the power of faith. The power of faith, you accept the righteousness of God.

[ 36 : 35 ] And the power of faith, you believe in the righteousness of God. And it has been revealed to you in the gospel. Here's the righteousness of God. Let me get back up here at the balcony. You can't see me down there. The righteousness of God is this. It is not that you have done enough to be accepted by God.

Because none of us have. It is not that you made yourself. Righteousness means to be right with God. Okay? It is not that you worked hard enough, you labored enough, and you finally made yourself right with God.

Because you can't do it. Paul is going to lay that out starting in verse 18. And he's going to show you how you can't do it. That's not the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is not, I'm going to make myself right with God.

Friend, you can wear yourself out and it will never happen. The righteousness of God is also not God making you right with Him. It is not God making you right.

It is not God coming down and saying, Hey, you're right. I'm going to take all this away and I'm just going to make you right. Because none of us are right. No, not one. All of us are desperately wicked.

[ 37 : 34 ] Everyone, listen, even the greatest saint, and we are saints by calling, even those of us who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we still do not deserve heaven. We still do not deserve glory.

We're still not right. We're still messed up, right? We are messed up people. I am a messed up individual. Man, I'm messed up. But God didn't make me right. The righteousness of God is this.

Even though I am not right, He sees me as if I am right. He didn't make me right. I don't work my way to being right. As a matter of fact, I'm not even right.

I ain't right. And neither are you. We just ain't right. The righteousness of God is this, that by faith we believe a holy God looks upon us and He sees the blood of Jesus Christ.

And because of the blood of Jesus Christ, He sees us as if we are right, even when we ain't right. He sees us as if we are perfect, even when we ain't perfect.

[ 38 : 35 ] And being God, He knows we ain't right. And being God, He knows we're not perfect. And being God, He knows we're messed up. But being God, He can decide not to take notice of that.

And the righteousness of God by faith that we accept is, even though He knows all that, He looks at us and He says, man, you're good. You know what, my child?

I love you as you are. You know what, my child? You're perfect. You're mine. You're forgiven. You're redeemed.

And the blood of Jesus Christ is more than enough. He doesn't look through rose-tinted glasses. He looks through blood-stained eyes. And through those blood-stained eyes, He says, you're not right, but the way I'm looking at you, you look like you're right.

And I want you to be with me forever. By faith. Some of you say, well, I've got problems. Yes, you do. So do I join the club, everyone? I haven't met a person yet that doesn't have problems.

[ 39 : 34 ] You say, oh, you don't know how big my problems are. You don't know how big mine are either, but evidently you don't know how big my God is. Because here's the thing, I'm not telling you God's going to make you right. I'm not telling you you'll eventually be right.

I'm going to tell you the righteousness of God says He can look at you as if you are right. Even in your problems. And the only way you'll know that is through the power of faith.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for this day. God, I don't know what it is you're doing today. I thank you so much for what you've shown me. I thank you, Lord, for the way you look at each one of us, for the love you have for us.

God, the grace and mercy you pour out upon us. Lord, grace to call us here this morning to be reminded of your love. Lord, we ask that you would move in each life. We ask that you would touch each heart.

God, that you would draw us closer to you. That you would be glorified and honored. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

[ 41:27 ] Thank you.