

Living by faith



Romans 1-8

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Introduction

The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Romans in around AD AD57. It was probably written in Corinth on the last of Paul's recorded missionary journey in the book of Acts. At the time Paul was intending to head back to Jerusalem and after going there head off to Rome on his way to Spain. Paul had wanted to visit Rome for some time as he was eager to preach the gospel among them to encourage and strengthen the mainly Gentile believers there. But the apostle did not wait until he got there to make known his gospel. The letter to the Romans is all about the gospel of Christ. In this letter Paul explains the message that he had been entrusted with and why all people both Jews and Gentiles needed to believe it and what it means for those who did.

Yours in Christ

Philip Calman
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1. The gospel of God

Romans 1:1-17

Introduction

Have you had to introduce yourself to a group of strangers? Did you find it difficult to know what to say about yourself? If you had to do make such an introduction, what would be the sort of things that you would say about yourself so that they came away with a sense of who you are?

In the letter to the Romans the apostle Paul introduces himself to a group of people he had never personally visited. Paul had never visited Rome. But that was all about to change for he was planning to visit them on his way to Spain and he was hoping that they might assist him on his way there (15:14). This letter was written to prepare the way for that visit. Paul wrote it to introduce himself, the reason for visiting them and the gospel he preached among the Gentiles.

Paul's gospel

The apostle Paul began his personal introduction in the greeting section of the letter. Please read verses 1 to 6 where the apostle introduces himself, his gospel and to whom the letter is written (the original readers).

1. How does Paul describe himself and what is it that he has been called to do?

2. Normal the greetings in a letter were relatively brief. Paul's greetings are however quite lengthy. Paul includes a brief summary of the gospel he had been called to serve. What do we learn about the gospel?

3. How has Jesus been declared to be the Son of God in power?

4. How does the apostle describe the Romans and what they had received?

Think about it

What are the implications of Jesus' Lordship for people everywhere (see also 16:26)?

How does the apostle serve Christ?

What do you think the implications of Jesus being Lord are for his servants today? Why are those who have been called to belong to Jesus to be like this?

Paul's visit

In the greetings Paul explained who he was and introduced his gospel. In verses 8 to 17 he explains more about himself and informs them about his reason for wanting to visit. Please read these verses.

5. Paul begins this explanation of why he wanted to visit them by revealing what he prayed for when he prayed for them (8-10). What did he give thanks for and what did he pray for?

6. Why did Paul want to visit them (11-13)?

Think about it

In these verses Paul explain why he wanted to visit them revealing some things about himself and some things about the Romans.

What further do we learn about the believers in Rome?

What do we learn about Paul?

Paul's eagerness

7. Why was the apostle eager to preach the gospel in Rome (14-16)?

8. Why is the gospel the power of salvation for all people (17, see also 10:3-4, 2 Cor. 5:21)?

Think about it

What is the spiritual gift that Paul wanted to give to the Romans?

How does Paul do this (1:15 & 1:9)?

What is the sort of harvest that Paul is looking to have among them?

What things ought we be hoping to see in our ministry together?

Conclusion

The apostle Paul was eager to preach the gospel everywhere and especially in those places where it had not been already preached (15:17-24). This was

apparently why he wanted to visit Spain and why he also wanted to visit Rome on his way there. He was eager to preach the gospel among the Romans.

Think about it

Why do you think people aren't as eager to preach the gospel, as perhaps they ought to be?

What do you think it means to live by faith?

How do we strengthen and encourage one another so we might continue in our faith?

Going Further

For those who want to go further you might to like to think about....

1. Looking at the following Old Testament passages that looked forward to what God would do in the gospel and summarise what they were promising:

Daniel 7:1-28

Isaiah 9:1-7: 11:1-10

Isaiah 53

2. Romans 1:16-17 have sometimes been thought of as the key text that the rest of the letter is simply expounding and explaining. Over the next two to three weeks work at committing at least verse 16 and perhaps also verse 17 to memory as way of taking the truth of God's word with you wherever you go.

3. In preparation for next week please read Genesis chapter 3 and the story of the fall of humanity into sin. It has been suggested that Paul wrote about the sinfulness of humanity in Romans 1:18-32 against the general backdrop of the story of the fall. Please read the story of Adam and Eve and answer the following questions: What was it that made the fruit of the middle of the tree desirable? What lies did the woman chose to believe about God rather than believe the truth that they should have known?