

Sermon Series: Book of Romans
Sermon title: "The Message of the Gospel"
Scripture Reading: Romans 1:1-7
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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Introduction:

Well, if you're anything like me...in order to really understand what people are saying, you need eye contact.

Maybe it's because of my age or maybe it's because I can't see people's mouths due to masks...but lately I've had a hard time hearing people clearly.

I think especially these days, in the times we live in, we really need to listen well. It's easy to not make eye contact with people cause we are on our phones or we can even be looking at each other and really not listening.

But clarity is crucial.

Especially when it comes to truth.

As we begin the letter of Paul to the **Romans** today, we will see that he wants to be very clear, right off the bat, about the message that he preaches.

The letter to the **Romans** is full of teaching about the gospel message.

Can you and I clearly articulate the good news about Jesus? It's my hope and prayer that as we study this wonderful letter that we will be able to say, 'Yes'.

Let's pray.

I want to break up this first greeting section by looking at 3 things.

- I. The Recipients
- II. The Writer
- III. The Reason (that he's writing)

I. The Recipients

This letter is written 'to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.' **Romans 1:7**

We don't really know how the church in Rome was founded. Probably some from Rome heard the gospel from Peter at Pentecost when he preached about Jesus and took the message back to Rome.

A couple named Aquila and Priscilla we know were there before.

They may have had something to do with it. They're back in Rome now and they have a church 'in their house' **Romans 16:5**.

There may have been several house churches in Rome. Probably not just one little church.

So, the recipients of this letter are the Roman Christians.

II. The Writer

Paul is mentioned as the writer. Paul is a Jewish Roman citizen from (what is today) Turkey, who formerly hunted Christians down to throw them in prison. He seems to be the lead instigator that led to the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

But this Paul had a supernatural experience with Jesus Christ. As he went along the road to Damascus Syria, he saw a blinding light and Jesus Christ confronted him and asked him why he was persecuting the church.

This Paul was transformed and he was used by God to take the gospel (which is the good news about Jesus) across the Roman Empire.

Paul didn't start the church in Rome.

He has never met most of the people there, except Aquila and Priscilla.

Maybe they had written to him and told him about some things going on in their church. Though he hasn't met those in the churches, he wants to visit them badly.

He says in the first part of the letter:

"I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you."

Again he says, "I have often intended to come to you but thus far have been prevented" **Romans 1:10-13**

Since the Romans don't know Paul, in starting this letter, he first needs to establish his credibility and make his gospel message clear.

Clarity is crucial.

It seems they've heard lots of rumors about Paul and his message. Some say he teaches some strange things.

Is his message true?

Can he be trusted?

Let's now dive into what Paul says about himself.

Paul is his Greek name. His Jewish name is Saul.

Maybe some of you have 2 names.

He describes himself this way:

- A servant of God
- Called to be an apostle
- Set apart for the gospel of God.

First, Paul calls himself a '[servant of God](#)', literally a '*slave of God*'. This word *duolos* means that Paul sees himself as one who belongs to Jesus Christ and he is doing what Jesus tells him to do. Paul is a like a free slave though and serves Christ gladly, not out of duty.

Secondly, he is [called to be an Apostle](#). This is very important because Paul was accused of not being the real deal. You see, he wasn't one of the original 12 disciples who walked with Jesus and saw him alive.

He saw Jesus in a vision on the road to Damascus and was called by Jesus to follow him and to be sent out to be his witness.

Thirdly, he also says that he is '[set apart for the gospel of God](#)'.

This is a profound statement.

It is similar to how an Old Testament prophet would sound, like Jeremiah.

In **Galatians 1:15**, Paul said that he was set apart before he was even born.

Make no mistake about it.

Paul is the real deal.

He is 100% totally sold out to Jesus Christ.

He saw Jesus with his own eyes and was called by him to this task. In fact, he was born for this.

Now, I want to spend the rest of the time on why Paul is writing to the Romans and what his message is.

III. The Reason

Paul says he is '[set apart for the gospel of God](#)'.

What is the gospel of God?

It's the good news about Jesus Christ.

Look at the things that Paul says here about the gospel.

- [Promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures.](#)
 - **Concerning his Son**
- [Descended from David according to the flesh](#)

- Declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.
 - **Jesus Christ our Lord.**
- Obedience and faith
- For his name's sake
- Among all the nations

Let's go through these one by one.

- Promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. This means that the good news of Jesus was planned and written down long before in the Old Testament writings. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David...they all point to Jesus and what God would do through him. It's all concerning his Son.
- Descended from David according to the flesh. This literally means that he was of the seed or offspring of David. David was the great king but God said that there would come another King who would be from David's ancestral line who would be king forever.
- Declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.

This is a unique statement.

What it DOESN'T mean is that Jesus became the Son of God at the resurrection. He is eternally, God the Son.

What it DOES mean is that Jesus the suffering servant who came in weakness, was inaugurated and crowned King and Lord in power through and by his Resurrection from the dead. The resurrection was his coronation and celebration of the new era of his reign.

Similarly, like Prince Charles is already now King Charles III but there will be a ceremony to declare it to all at a later date.

Jesus has always been the eternal God the Son but at his resurrection, his real identity was unveiled in power. He came in weakness but showed his power at the resurrection.

He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

He rules and reigns forevermore.

- **Obedience and faith.** This means that Paul is calling everyone everywhere to have faith in Jesus....and having faith in Jesus is really obeying him. Submitting to who he says he is and acknowledging the truth of the gospel and saying...*'ok, I bow the knee. He is Lord and I will obey him by faith.'*

- **For the sake of his name.** This is the ultimate goal of people coming to faith in Christ and obeying him....that he is magnified, glorified, made to be seen for who he really is; that his name may be praised.
- **Among all the nations.** God's plan and God's desire is to save people from every ethnic group, every tribe, every language group. Paul was called by God as a special agent to preach the gospel to the nations.
- **Including you (Romans) who are loved by God and called to be saints.**

So, the reason why Paul is writing to the Romans and specifically giving them this greeting....is to establish the Message of the Gospel clearly so that they know they can trust him....

and later we will see that he's doing that because wants to encourage them to live in harmony with each other and support his mission to go to Spain.

APPLICATION

As I left the university last night after our Mooncake Festival Party, I pondered how to apply this text to our lives.

The truth is that many of us who are Christians can't find much application here.

We read this.

We know this.

We believe this.

Yes, the Old Testament prophets all spoke of one who would come later who would be King, who would save people from Satan, who would be the lamb of God sacrificed for their sins, who would rise again, give them new hearts, put his Spirit within them, transform them from the inside out.

We know this. We believe this.

So, we see little application. It's old news.

So, what do we do with this text Christians?

But the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

It is a **stumbling block** to some and **folly** to others **but to those who are called...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **1 Corinthians 1:18, 23,24****

There are billions of people in the world who don't believe this message about Jesus.

Do you know it?
Do you rehearse it?
Do you share it?

Would you be willing to ask God to make you a
gospel-focused person?

If you don't know Jesus today...I have a message for
you and that message is simple...and it's included in
Paul's last line in **verse 7**.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ.

(Greek greeting and Jewish greeting)

May God give grace to you....his unmerited &
unearned favor and kindness toward sinners. And may
he give you peace. There's no peace in this life unless
first you experience God's grace.

And that grace and peace come from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can I pray for you?