

Romans 1:1–32 — The Gospel, the Glory of God, and the Condition of Man

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to speak about faith in the past tense? We talk about a moment when God met us, a time when we were changed, an experience that marked our lives. But the real question is this: *Is that past encounter still shaping your present walk?* The opening chapter of Romans presses that question on every believer, and it does so by anchoring us firmly in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:1–7

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul begins not with credentials, but with surrender. He identifies himself first as a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Twenty-five years earlier, on the road to Damascus, Paul asked a life-defining question: “Who are You, Lord?” That question was not a momentary impulse—it became the trajectory of his life. A genuine encounter with Christ does not fade into memory; it shapes daily obedience.

Paul understood his calling, and that clarity anchored him. God does not call everyone to the same role, but He calls every believer to faithfulness. The highest calling of your life is not measured by visibility or influence, but by obedience. When we attempt to become something God has not called us to be, we step outside His grace and invite frustration. When we embrace what He *has* called us to be, we find peace.

Paul also grounds the gospel in history and prophecy. Jesus Christ came from the seed of David according to the flesh, fulfilling the promises made long before. Yet He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. The cross reveals the love of God—Jesus saved us by shedding His blood there. The resurrection declares who He truly is: God, Savior, and Lord.

Grace and peace always appear in that order. Peace is not achieved through effort; it flows from grace received.

Romans 1:8–15

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you

also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

Paul's heart for the church is pastoral, not self-centered. He prays, he longs to encourage, and he expects mutual strengthening. Ministry is never a one-way exchange. When God uses you to bless others, He blesses you in the process.

Paul saw himself as a debtor—not because salvation can be repaid, but because grace creates responsibility. When God entrusts us with the gospel, we become stewards of it.

Romans 1:16–17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Here we reach the heartbeat of Romans. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God—not merely His moral perfection, but His righteous way of making sinners right with Himself. God cannot forgive sin by ignoring it. Justice demands payment. At the cross, that payment was made. Jesus stood in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous, so that forgiveness could be granted without compromising God's holiness.

Salvation begins by faith and continues by faith. The Christian life is not sustained by striving, but by trusting.

Romans 1:18–23

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

God has revealed Himself clearly—through conscience and through creation. The problem is not lack of evidence, but refusal to honor God as God. When people reject His authority, their thinking becomes distorted. Ungodliness leads to unrighteousness, and both invite judgment.

Refusing to glorify God is often subtle. It appears when we insist on controlling outcomes, when we demand God conform to our desires, or when we treat Him as a means to our ends rather than the Lord of our lives.

Romans 1:24–32

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves... For this reason God gave them up to vile passions... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind... being filled with all unrighteousness... who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Three times Paul says God “gave them up.” This is not God forcing sin upon humanity; it is God allowing people to experience the consequences of rejecting Him. When truth is suppressed long enough, moral confusion follows.

The downward spiral described here is not ancient history—it is painfully current. When a society removes God from its thinking, disorder fills the vacuum. And Paul’s warning reaches even further: approval of sin is itself participation in it.

Practical Application

Ask yourself honestly: *Am I living by faith, or merely agreeing with it?* Grace calls us to surrender, not self-rule.

A Challenge for Believers

Guard your heart and mind. Do not normalize what God has called destructive. Live as one who glorifies God as God—trusting His will, submitting to His wisdom, and walking by faith day by day.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

Romans begins by revealing the problem so that the solution shines clearly. Sin separates, judgment is real, but grace is available. Jesus shed His blood on the cross for your sins. God raised Him from the dead, declaring Him to be Lord. Today, you can turn to Him in faith, receive forgiveness, and begin a new life grounded in grace, peace, and truth.

As we read through this letter, may God deepen our understanding, steady our faith, and draw us closer to Himself through the power of the gospel.