**Romans 1:1-17**

**The Righteousness of God! (Lesson #2)**

***1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was 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, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, 7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

**Vs 1 -** As is Paul’s custom, he identifies himself by both name and office.

**Name:** Paul: **Παῦλος (*pow’-los*)**, it means **small or little**.

It is fitting, I suppose that the greatest man (apart of Christ) the church has ever be blessed with and his name means small.

**Office:**

1. He leads with the statement that he is **“servant”** of Christ Jesus. The Greek word is **δοῦλος *(doo’-los)****,* and points to the slaves of Paul’s day as well as the bondservants of the Old Testament.

In Roman times, the term bondservant usually referred to one who was held in a **permanent position of servitude**. Under Roman law, a bondservant was considered the **owner’s personal property**. **Slaves** essentially had no rights and could even be killed with impunity by their owners.

The **Hebrew** word for “bondservant,” *‘****ebed***, had a very similar connotation. Mosaic Law had conditions for an **indentured servant** to become a **bondservant** voluntarily:

*“But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ 6then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever (Ex 21:5-6, ESV).*

Paul led with the fact that he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Let the richness of the Greek and Hebrew ideas catch your attention. Paul saw himself first and foremost as a bondslave, a voluntary slave, a willing slave of the Christ Jesus and this is how Paul often referred to himself.

Paul is a servant a **doulous**, and willing slave of Christ Jesus.

**Jesus** was his name, **Christos** (meaning anointed is his title). This is the Greek eqivalent of the Hebrew **משׁיח** **(maw-shee’-akh)-** this is the promised anointed coming Messiah (Dan 9:25-26).

**Paul is a willing slave of the anointed one, the promised Messiah, Jesus!**

\*\*\* So is it just the apostles, who should consider themselves slaves?

**THEOLOGY:**

All believers today should consider themselves bondservants (consider Ex 21:5-6) or slaves of Christ (I Cor 6:20, I Cor 7:22; II Tim 2:24-25). He is our Lord and master, and our allegiance is due to Him alone. As bondservants, we renounce other masters (Matthew 6:24) and give ourselves totally to Him (Matthew 16:24).

*“for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1Co 6:20 ESV)*

1. He was **called** to be an **apostle**. So not just a bondservant, but a ***“called”*** ***“apostle”***. We need to deal with both of these words.

Let’s deal with the word translated **called** first. The Greek word is **κλητός** *(klay-tos’)* and it means to **invite**, to **be selected**, to **be appointed***.*

1. Paul is a **servant** of Messiah whose name is Jesus and he is/was **called to be** is an **apostle**. The Greek word here **ἀπόστολος (*ap-os’-tol-os)*** means **messenger**, **delegate**, or **one who is sent**. In the New Testament it is not used to describe simply a messenger, but a **unique and particular office**, the office of an apostle.

I want you to jot this down in your mind, that Paul was **called** **κλητός** *(klay-tos’)* to be an **apostle**. It will come back around here in a second.

**THEOLOGY:** To be an apostle (in the New Testament Biblical sense) there were specific requirements.

1. Term was originally used to describe the 12 whom Jesus chose (Mat 10:2, Luk 6:13, Luk 22:14).
2. Following Judas’ betrayal and suicide, Peter recommended they replace Judas with someone who was **“a witness to his resurrection”** (Acts 1:22).
3. Paul acknowledged that apostles were people who had **seen Jesus Christ** (ICor 9:1).
4. Here in just a couple of verses we will see that that the office of an apostle, is an office a person is appointed to by Christ (Rom 1:7).
5. We see that miracles were often wrought at the hands of the apostles (Acts 2:43, 5:12, 8:18).
6. Apostles had unique authority within the church and spoke and wrote with authority like the OT Scriptures (I Cor 14:37, Gal 1:8-9, I Thes 2:13, II Pet 3:15-16).
7. The apostles wrote or were directly involved with those who wrote, all of the New Testament.

**An apostle is different** than an **elder** (Acts 15:2, 15:6, 15:22) or a **brother** (Acts 11:1, 15:23, ICor 1:1)

**As you think about apostles in the New Testament church, Paul, Peter, James, John Mark, Luke, these were apostles or their direct associates who all wrote and spoke with apostolic authority.**

Paul was a **servant**, who was **called**, to be an **apostle.**

**Of course, it is important for Paul to tell his readers that he is an apostle, because of the credibility and the authority that comes with that position.**

Still in verse 1. We are told a **forth point:**

1. Paul says that he was **“set apart”,** the Greek word means **separated**, or **marked off** for something.

Still in verse 1, Paul was **set apart**, he was **marked off**, which brings us to point #5.

1. He was set apart “to the” Gospel

At this point, with the word gospel comes out of his mouth, he quickly transitions to shift from talking about himself, to talking about the gospel!

**Gospel –** The Greek word is translated gospel is **εὐαγγέλιον (*yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on)***and it means **good news** or **glad tidings**. The gospel is the **glad tidings**, **the good news of God**.

Now, you should be thinking… Why is it good news? Paul will explain!

So having mentioned the word **εὐαγγέλιον (*yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on)* “gospel”,** Paul immediately begins to put flesh on the bones.

**The Gospel**

1. First, Paul says it is the **gospel of God.** Although Paul is **teaching** and **preaching** the **gospel,** the source, the owner, the author is God.Paul often will refer to it as “my gospel”, but he means he has made it his own, much like when we are saved, we make it out own.
* The gospel is not an invention of man, but rather the plan and program of God.
* The gospel is not principally about us, it is principally about GOD!
* The gospel is not about making bad people good, or even good people better. The gospel is about bringing dead people to life!

**Vs 2 -** Point 2 - Further, the gospel is not a new or novel,but rather it is something that was **promised through the Old Testament prophets** in **the Holy Scriptures** (Old Testament).

**We are right, when we look for the gospel in the Old Testament** for it is there, **that is what God was promising before**, through the prophets, the gospel, the good news!

*\*\*\* It is important to note, that for the most part, the Jewish people missed this point. They were so focused on the law, that they missed the good news (gospel) that was tucked away in the Old Testament!*

**Vs 3a - Point 3 -** Of the gospel **- Concerns His (God’s) Son.** The gospel is God’s plan, promised in the Old Testament by the prophets, and it is about, focuses on, revolves around, **concerns His Son!**

* The gospel is not about being a good person, it is not about things we do or things we do not do. The gospel is not about our behavior.
* The gospel is not moralistic teaching. The gospel is not what you need to do to be a better person. The gospel is not a creed or a confession. The gospel is not a denomination (Baptist or Methodist), the gospel (the good news) is God’s plan, promised in the Old Testament, by the prophets and it is **about His Son, Jesus Christ!**

**APPLICATION:** If a Jew, Muslim, or Jehovah Witness can set through the lesson with us, then that lesson did not touch upon the gospel.

**Having mentioned God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, it is almost like the mind of Paul races ahead to ensure we know who Jesus is:**

**Vs 3b –** **Jesus Christ,** Point #1: **Descended from David according to the flesh.**

This of course is factually true, and of course highlights Jesus’ humanity.

But it is also **highlighting that Jesus descends from the line of the legitimate kings** of the combined nation of Israel, and then after the kingdom split, the legitimate line of Judah. **Jesus is the promised ultimate and final king** that we have been hoping for in our study in I Kings in fulfillment of the promise made to David in (II Sam 7:12-16).

Since Jesus is the God man, remember the Holy Spirit of God overshadowed Mary and she became pregnant with the God child (humanly speaking), **whose lineage would link back to David (Mary of Joseph)?**

You see the answer as recorded by Matthew (Mat 1) and Luke (Luk 3) is BOTH! This should blow our mind! All of the prophecies involving linage of the coming Messiah are fulfilled regardless of which human line we trace.

Paul is laying the foundation that Jesus is the promised messiah and promised king that would rule forever (II Sam 7:12-16, Is 11:1-5).

**Vs 4 -** Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, did not make him the son of God, His resurrection from the dead did not cause him to become the son of God. **His resurrection from the dead, was the declaration to the entire world** that Jesus Christ is the **SON OF GOD**!

**God has raised Jesus (His Son, the second person of the Godhead) from the dead. This is the ultimate and final declaration of who Jesus is!**

Now, I want to touch upon something. Maybe you are thinking, sure, but Jesus brought other people back from the dead, the woman’s son from Nain (luk 7) or Lazarus (John 11). Those of course showed forth his great power over death (at least temporarily), but both the boy from Nain and Lazarus, went on to die. It was a resuscitation, if you like.

**The empty tomb is not a resuscitation**, it is **resurrection**. The power of death is broken. **The empty tomb was that for Jesus and he serves as the “first fruits” for you and I!**

God raised Jesus, His son, from the dead to prove that he is thepromised Messiah, he is God’s Son, and as we see in **δύναμις** (*doo’-nam-is*) it is where we get the **English word dynamite**.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the **dynamite declaration** of God to the **entire creation** that **Jesus Christ is His Son**, He is the **promised Messiah**, and he is also… **notice it at the end of Vs 4**,

**Vs 4b -** His identity and title: **He is Jesus Christ our Lord!**

Notice he is not just **Lord**, which of course he is. But he is “**OUR” Lord!**

He is Jesus, who is the Christ **Χριστός** (*khris-tos’) – the word means annointed* (Messiah) who is also the Lord **κύριος** (*koo’-ree-os) -* the Greek word means **master**, **lord**, **sovereign**, **owner**.

The man Jesus, descended from David, is also the promised Messiah, who is our **Lord! All of this together demands that we understand that Jesus is God.**

**Let’s review and summarize:** The gospel is about Jesus who is the promised Messiah, he descended from King David according to the flesh, but at the same time is declared to be the very Son of God, this declaration by the Holy Spirit as evidenced in that he rose from the dead.

**From the mouth of Jesus (the Messiah human and divine)**

*“****41*** *¶ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question,* ***42*** *saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David."* ***43*** *He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,* ***44*** *"’The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"’?* ***45*** *If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?"* ***46*** *And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.” (Mt 22:41-46 ESV)*

**The empty tomb is the evidence of who Jesus is to the entire world (Jew and Gentile).**

**CHRISTOLOGY:**

1. Humanly, descended from King David and the rightful king.
2. Divinely, the unique Son of God, the second person of the Godhead and this was declared so in great power at His resurrection.
3. Very man, the last Adam (I Cor 15:45).
4. Very God (Joh 1:1-5).

**Vs 5 –** Earlier, in verse one, before Paul said he was an **apostle**, he said he was **a slave**. Here, before he says he received the apostolic office, he tells his readers he was a recipient of grace!

**This reminds us we are saved by grace, through faith, it is truly the gift of God. Before anything else, you and I as God’s children are recipients of His marvelous grace!**

Listen to Paul and Peter’s unique apostolic authority:

*“7b when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.” (Ga 2:7-10 ESV)*

Paul’s apostolic authority was principally centered outside of Israel, while Peter’s was inside Israel. But, keep in mind, Peter is the first one to bring a Gentile into the church (Cornelius) (Acts 10). Regardless, these verses would be yet another reason it is very unlikely that Peter started the church in Rome.

**To be an apostle was a position of great authority in the church.** Paul could command churches to obey (II These 3:4. I Tim 4:11) what he said, but often what he did instead was he urged or appealed to them to do the right thing (Phm 1:8).

The office of an apostle is not something man appoint themselves to, nor is an office that men appoint others to. I mentioned this in the points about an apostle. **Apostles are appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ!**

We see a second point worthy of our attention. God’s chief aim, it appears from this text, with the establishment of the office of apostle was to… **BRING ABOUT the obedience of faith.** Here me, this is an obedience that springs from faith!

**Martin Luther –** *“We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.”*

So God had apostles in the early church f**or the establishment of the faith** and the call to obedience by faith. Or we could say the **obedience that is produced by faith, or a faith-based obedience. (Rom 16:25-26).**

**Finally in verse 5**, we see a third point worthy of mentioning. Namely, that Paul and the others, have been given grace, to bring about obedience that is produced by faith **among all nations**.

The Gospel is not a **Jewish thing**, any more than it is a **Gentile thing**. **It is an all the nations of the earth thing!**

**Vs 6 -**  Paul reminds them this **call to obeisance produced by faith**, involves **them**, the believers in Rome (Jew and Gentile).

The ones who are called (there it is again) of Jesus Christ.

**Vs 7 -** Here we have the **recipients of Paul’s letter**. Let’s just unpack how Paul describes **them**:

1. To all those who are in Rome… (residents or at least currently residing in Rome).
2. Loved by God…

If you are a believer, you are **“loved by God.”**

As he writes to believers, he refers to them as those who are “beloved” of God.

1. Who are **“called”** to be saints.

Once again the Grek word is **κλητός** *(klay-tos’) -* as I told you a few minutes ago, the word means to **invite**, to be **selected**, to be **appointed**.

Just as Paul was called to be an apostle and all that meant, you and I have been **called to be saints.**

The Greek word translated **“saint”** is the Greek word **ἅγιος** (*hag’-ee-os).* It means **called out ones**, it means **set apart ones**, it means saints. It means **holy ones.**

**People can get confused here.** Holy is not principally what you do or do not do, it is that secondarily. It is principally that you are set apart for God. Think for a moment, the temple was holy, the utensils were holy. They were set apart.

The same is true for you and I. **We are set apart!** Now because we are set apart, it impacts our lives and how we live!

You see you are I were **called out of darkness**, into the light, into the Kingdom of Christ, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is God’s eternal plan.

As surely as Jesus called Lazarus from the grave, He called you and I through the gospel to step out of our spiritual grave!

**Vs 7 -** The end of the opening salutation: **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

This exact greeting, word for word, is found in nine of Paul’s epistles.When he writes to Titus and Timothy, Paul adds the word mercy.

I have said it multiple times, I will say it again, **without grace** there can be **no peace**.

We could say, no grace, no peace, or know grace, know peace

This grace **χάρις** (*khar’-ece)* and peace**εἰρήνη** (*i-ray’-nay).* Peace (shalom) is the common greeting for Hebrews, but Paul’s common greeting for believers is **grace and peace**.

**THEOLOGY (ANTHROPOLOGY):** Apart from the grace of God, men and women are enemies of God. Our sins have separated us from God, they have resulted in us becoming enemies of God, resisting God, and resenting God, in fact the natural man will not receive the things of God (I Cor 2:14).

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***8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you —  12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.***

**Vs 8 -** Thankfulness to God should be the first thing for us as well!

*“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (Ps 100:4 ESV)*

*“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1Th 5:18 ESV)*

**For all that God has given us, we should be thankful!**

We will see this next week, as God lays out the charges against man:

*“For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” (Ro 1:21 ESV)*

This is one of the many charges against lost mankind. They know God exists, we will talk about that, they do not honor him, we will talk about that, and they are not thankful for all that he has done!

**Vs 8 -** Paul made a practice of beginning his letters with a word of thanks to God, a specific prayer, and a personal message to the recipients. He rejoiced that news of their faith had spread all over the (known) world, (i.e., the Roman Empire). Keep in mind not only the environment, but the modes of travel. This is a rather amazing statement!

The believers in Rome are known through-out the world and what is proclaimed is their FAITH!

**An Important Point:** Sometimes when we read the Bible, and we import a modern idea of the words, that the writer did not mean. Here is an example, when Paul said:

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in **all the world**.”

Two Greek words here: **ὅλος** (*hol’-os) and* **κόσμος** (*kos’-mos). We would translate this:* ***“whole world”***

So did Paul mean, the whole world **“globally”** the way we might think of those two words today.

\*\* When he wrote this was he thinking of the Chinese or the North American Indians? No, of course not and this helps us understand that context is critical when we read. Paul meant the whole known world or the whole Roman empire.

But Paul’s point is, in a day with no Twitter, email, Facebook, texting, or even smart phones, the faith of the church that existed in Rome was being spoken about throughout the entire known world.

**Vs 9 –10 -** Paul marches God in the dock, and here is what he says **without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.**

I pray for you, church in Rome, without ceasing… God is my witness.

**He is being driven intrinsically.**

That without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers. We are very familiar with I Thes 5:17: **“Pray without ceasing…”**

Now he does not mean that he was praying for them 24/7, rather he has not removed them form his pray list. He keeps praying for them. He does not stop praying for them.

Now we do not know everything that Paul is praying for the church in Rome, but we do not one thing, for he tells us: **Vs 10b - asking that somehow by God’s will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you.**

**Vs 11-12 -** Paul makes it clear, they are on his prayer list and he longs to see them. The word Paul chooses here is the word that means to **strongly desire**, to **pursue with love**, to **long after**.

This is a word, that points us to the heart of the apostle. He loved fellow believers and he had a deep desire to meet up with those in Rome and he tells us why…

**That he may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen them.**

* 1. To exercise his own spiritual gifts among them, likely through teaching.
	2. To bestow some spiritual blessing upon them.

**That they may be together encouraged by each other’s faith.**

Paul did not envision the blessings as only flowing from him, but he recognized a channel that flowed between them where he was enriching and encouraging them and they, him.

**Vs 13 –** Paul then tells them something they may not know, but he wants them to fully understand. Namely, that he had **“often”** intended to come to them, but thus far have been prevented.

Paul has not only a desire to come, put he had even **“planned”** to come. But he had been **hindered** (**prevented**, **forbidden**, or **refused**).

\*\*\* If you are like me you have some immediate questions for Paul. What and who hindered you? What did that look like?

Now interestingly enough that is all he says about it here. But let me show you what he says in chapter 15, that sheds some light on what, I believe, he meant:

*“****19b*** *…so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;* ***20*** *and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation,* ***21*** *but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."* ***22*** *¶ This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.* ***23*** *But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you,* ***24*** *I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.” (Ro 15:19b-24 ESV)*

So in verse 20 Paul says, my aim, my ambition, my goal is to preach the gospel where the name of Jesus is not known. He then loosely quotes Is 52:15. His point seems to be that he sees his ministry as fulfilling God’s promise. We will talk more about this when we actually get there.

Jesus was known in Rome, he was not known in these western areas of the Roman empire and his desires to come to Rome was blocked by his **greater desire to preach Jesus where he was not known**!

Then he explains why, and we see once again, the heart of a missionary:

**Vs 13b-** That he might see people **place faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**. That he might **preach the gospel** and **see men and women converted**.

It is this thought that catapults his mind, once again, to discuss the gospel.

**Vs 14-15 -** Paul indicates that he is under obligation to both Greeks and barbarians (to both wise and fools).

The Greek word translated obligation means to **owe a debt, to have an obligation, to be bound by duty to do something** for someone else. As you consider this, consider how Paul understood his apostleship to the Gentiles.

Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles saw himself under a debt, an obligation, because he was called, he had an unfulfilled responsibility to **“preach the gospel.”**

The Greeks saw everyone as either Greek or Barbarian, literally someone who spoke Greek and had an appreciation for the culture of someone who did not.

Barbarians are those who did not speak Greek. The Ostrogoths, Visigoths, the Huns are some of the many examples of surrounding nations that were not influenced by the Greek culture.

Most scholars believe, although we cannot be sure that (wise and fools) is another way in the Greek world to say educated Greeks and foolish.

**Vs 15 -** **So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.**

But it was more than an obligation. He was “eager” to preach the gospel to those in Rome! The idea of the word and **ready** and **willing**.

**Paul felt that way at every opportunity, even in the most hostile environment, he was ready, willing, and indeed eager to proclaim the gospel of Christ!**

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***Vs 16-17 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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."***

\*\*\* Here we get to the meat of this chapter and indeed the theme of this letter!

Remember when we defined the theme of Romans:

***“The revelation of God’s judging and saving righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the cross of Christ, God judges sin and yet at the same time manifests saving mercy”* (ESV Study Bible).**

These two theologically dense verses are made up of three subordinate clauses, each starting with the word for, and each supporting or illuminating the one before it!

**Now before we start unpacking**, it seems that every time Paul uses the word gospel, he feels a need to explain, expound, and further clarify, the gospel.

Just a few verses ago, Paul said the gospel and all of a sudden, he ran off and says “it”, the gospel:

*“1:2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son,*

But here once again, Paul says: **For I am not ashamed of the gospel** and all of a sudden, he explains, expounds, and further qualifies, the gospel.

**Paul was a fanatic for the Gospel, and we should be as well!**

**Vs 16 –**We have looked at the word gospel already, it is the Greek word **εὐαγγέλιον** (yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on). It means good news, it means glad tidings.

It is interesting, as you consider this verse that Paul chooses the negative **“not ashamed.”**

**Douglas Moo in his commentary states:** *“The negative form of Paul’s assertion, “I am not ashamed of the gospel…” may be a literary convention (litotes), justifying our rendering it as a straight-forward positive statement: “I have great confidence in the gospel.”*

The Message, which is a loose paraphrase, translates this verse:

*“It’s news I’m most proud to proclaim, this extraordinary Message of God’s powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts him, starting with Jews and then right on to everyone else!” (Ro 1:16 Message)*

In fact, this is exactly what Paul said elsewhere:

*“But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Ga 6:14 ESV)*

**Vs 16b –**So the gospel is the good news of God, but notice, it is also the **power of God.**

**The Greek word** here is **δύναμις** (doo’-nam-is) and means **strength**, **power**, **ability**, or **might**. It is where we get the **English word dynamite**.

Notice it is the **“power of God”** unto salvation. The Greek word is **σωτηρία** (so-tay-ree’-ah) and it means **salvation**, **deliverance**, and can include the idea of **protection**.**It is where we get the study of soteriology.**

**The gospel (the good news of God) is the dynamite power of God that delivers men and women from darkness and into a faith based relationship with God!**

**As you consider this, understand that Paul recognized that the gospel is God’s panacea, remedy, answer, or even medicine for mankind’s ill!**

But notice what Paul adds. The gospel, is the dynamite power of God to Jews and Gentiles. Also notice that Paul says: “to the Jew first…”

Obviously, historically the gospel went to Jews first (think of Pentecost, think of Paul’s travels as he would start out in the synagogues). Historically, there was a priority. Jesus went to Israel, Jesus was Himself born (humanly speaking) into a Jewish family as the promised Jewish King. The Nation of Israel, the Hebrews, the Jews, had a **chronological priority**. The gospel did indeed go to the Jew first.

Then Paul does something, God does something that He does not always do. He tells us why.

***Why the gospel is the dynamite of God to a saving relationship with our creator.***

**Vs 17 –** For in it! **In the gospel…** **the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

So, let’s unpack Paul’s points.

**The righteousness of God is a phrase that is repeated multiple times in Romans.**

The genitive **“of God”** can mean from God or belonging to God…

**Luther was the one who promoted the understanding that this verse is not speaking about God’s own righteousness, that which belongs to God. But rather, what Paul is speaking of is a righteousness that comes to us “from God.”**

Paul uses this way in Chapter 3:

*“21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it —  22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:” (Ro 3:21-22 ESV)*

This is a righteousness that God gives to those who believe, it does not come from the law. So where does it come from? The genitive, it is a righteousness “from God.”

But also in chapter 3, Paul seems to use it as a righteousness that belongs to God:

 *“24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.” (Ro 3:24-25 ESV)*

The gospel, also shows how God can be righteous and forgive sins. It explains how such an act does not make God unrighteous. The debt was paid by Christ.

**Here in chapter 1 which is it?**

First, as we will see the context demands first that it is a righteousness that flows from God. But I would only add, in this case, Paul (God) could mean both.

For in this case both are true, although I would only say the first seems to be the “most true!”

In the Western world, we do not like double meanings, in Scripture it is actually quite common.

**Vs 17 –** For in it, i**n the gospel…** the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

This phrase from faith to faith **(ek pistis eis pitis).**

**From or out of (ek) faith (pistis) into or towards (eis) faith (pistis).**

The ESV translates this “from faith for faith.” Probably the best way to understand “from faith for faith” which to me is a little confusing is **from faith beginning to end.** That seems to be the point. It is secured by faith and it is lived out by faith.

Phillips translation seems to get at this:

 *“I see in it God’s plan for making men right in his sight, a process begun and continued by their faith. For, as the scripture says: The righteous shall live by faith.” (Ro 1:17 Philips)*

And that is the point of the quote from Hab 2:4. The just shall live by faith.

*“"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab 2:4 ESV)*

**I believe what Paul is saying, to paraphrase, is that justification is all about, FAITH!**

**IMPORTANT POINT –** On this matter of faith, or belief. It is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it is his shed blood unto death, for our sins, that saves a person.

**We procure and secure that work, by faith**. So, our faith does not save us. **Our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ saves us.**

**We begin by faith and we continue by faith, it is all about faith!**

But notice, here Paul does not say that secures our salvation.Rather Paul says that faith, secures is **“the righteousness of God”** for us!

**That goes back to the first way we understood the genitive and is likely the “most correct” of the two although Paul could mean both.**

**SOTERIOLOGY Break:** This is the study of salvation. When you place faith in Jesus Christ, when you commit your life to Him, he takes your sins which he paid for in full at Calvary and he gives you “the righteousness of God!” This is what I called last week the **“Great exchange!”**

Now is a great time to discuss three Christians words that summarize salvation:

**Justification** – Declaration and reality that we are just before God (acquitted) - **Delivered from the penalty of sin.**

**Sanctification –** Set apart, this is our growing in grace because we are justified - **Delivered from the power of sin.**

**Glorification –** Awaits the resurrection, this is our final state, sin in all its forms is removed and we live holy and righteous lives before the Lord - **Deliverance from the presence of sin.**

When this righteousness is imputed to you, you are immediately (justified before God). You are declared righteous;

 you are acquitted of all crimes. The righteousness begins to work in your life in the form of sanctification (conforming you more and more into the image of Jesus) and it will culminate in your glorification (eternity in heaven with Christ)!

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Having discussed how man receives this righteousness, Paul is now going to explain the Gentiles desperate need of this righteousness. The antidote can only be fully appreciated and then embraced if one understands how severe and desperate the illness.