

March 8, 2026

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

Romans: For the Church Today

Unashamed: The Gospel That Changes Everything

Paul's letter to the Romans, written around A.D. 57 while he was in the city of Corinth, Greece. It was written to a diverse group of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, addresses the challenges of unity and faithfulness in a multicultural, often hostile environment. It appears that this letter was hand delivered by a faithful servant and friend of Paul, a lady by the name of Phoebe, from a nearby port city town of Cenchrea. The Letter to the Romans centers on humanity's universal need for salvation, justification by faith in Jesus Christ, the transformative power of grace, emphasizes unity between Jewish and Gentile believers and the call to live by the Spirit. "*Romans For the Church Today*" highlights how these foundational truths call the modern church to embrace grace, pursue righteousness, break down barriers of division, and embody Christlike love and service in a complex world, and live out transformed relationships in a divided world.

It is interesting to note that two key heroes of the church were greatly impacted by the teachings found in Romans. Martin Luther, a Catholic Priest was radically transformed by the reading of Romans occurred around 1515–1516 while he was lecturing on the book as a

professor at the University of Wittenberg. During this period, his study—especially of Romans 1:17—led him to embrace the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which became central to his theology and the Protestant Reformation, from which our Baptist theology and practice was derived.

Another person greatly impacted by Romans was John Wesley. After hearing Martin Luther's preface to Romans read at a meeting on Aldersgate Street in 1738, John Wesley felt his "heart strangely warmed" and experienced assurance of salvation by faith alone, marking a turning point from religious striving to a living, personal trust in Christ—an event that ignited the Methodist movement.

In other words, Romans is a life changing, purpose directing book that hopefully will bring a great effect upon us today in 2026.

Let's look today into verses 1-17 of Chapter 1:

ROMANS 1:1-17... ¹ *Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as 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 born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,* ⁴ *who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,* ⁵ *through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,* ⁶ *among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;*

7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome,
called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ First, I thank my
God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your
faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole
world. ⁹ 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, ¹⁰ always in
my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last
by the will of God I may succeed in coming to
you. ¹¹ For I long to see you so that I may impart some
spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 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. **13 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. ¹⁴ I am under obligation both to
Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the
foolish. ¹⁵ So, for my part, I am eager to preach the
gospel to you also who are in Rome. ¹⁶ 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 to faith; as it is written,
"BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

1. The Main Thing: The gospel is God's power to
save everyone who believes, and a church alive and
growing is one that is unashamed, gospel-centered, and
mission-driven. The Gospel, or Good News, as
described in Romans 1, is the proclamation that
through Jesus Christ, God offers salvation and
righteousness to all who believe, revealing His power
to rescue humanity from sin and unite people of every
background into His redeemed family.

The Greek word used here for Gospel is

<2098> εὐαγγέλιον *euaggelion*

Meaning: good news

Usage: good news(1), gospel(73), gospel's(2).(76x)

2. The Man, The Messenger: Paul

➤ **A Servant of the Gospel**

<1401> δοῦλος *doulos*. Meaning Servant, slave,
bond-servant

Usage: bond-servant(11), bond-servants(12),
bondslave(3), bondslaves(8), both men and
women(8), servants(1), slave(58), slave's(1),
slaves(39). (141x's)

Paul uses this term which would have been a familiar
one in the ancient Roman world where there was an
estimated 60 million slaves/servants. Paul identifies
himself as a servant/slave of Christ, and in a positive
not negative sense.

➤ Called as an Apostle

<652> ἀπόστολος *apostolos* (79x's)

Meaning: a messenger, one sent on a mission, an apostle. **Usage:** apostle(19), apostles(52), apostles'(5), messenger(1), messengers(1), is sent(1).

In the ancient Greek and Roman world, the word **apostolos** (ἀπόστολος) was primarily a secular term meaning “one who is sent off,” often used in maritime and military contexts. It described an admiral leading a fleet of ships on a colonizing mission, the fleet itself, or even the cargo and documents sent with a ship (such as a bill of lading or export license) [123](#). While it could occasionally refer to an ambassador or emissary, this was rare in secular Greek; the term was more commonly associated with naval expeditions, colonists sent overseas, or the bearer of a message [123](#). The Christian use of **apostolos** as a title for a divinely commissioned messenger or leader was a significant development, giving the word a new and distinctive meaning beyond its original secular usage into a divinely authorized representative foundational to the early church.

In the New Testament, several people other than the Twelve are called apostles. These other apostles include Paul, Barnabas ([Acts 14:14](#)), Silas and Timothy ([1 Thess. 2:6b](#); cf. [1 Thess. 1:1a](#)), Apollos ([1 Cor 1:12](#)), Epaphroditus ([Phil. 2:25](#)), Andronicus and Junia ([Rom. 16:7](#))—all people with

significant ministries. <https://margmowczko.com/junia-and-the-esv/>

So, there are two types of ‘apostles’. One is the best known and understood are the original 12 apostles appointed by Jesus, we add Paul as he says “**born out of due time**” ([1 Cor. 15:8](#)). This was a commissioned officer, so to speak in the Lord’s gospel army. The 2nd is a more general term used or non-commissioned leaders who served faithfully.

➤ Set Apart for the Gospel of God

<873> ἀφορίζω *aphorizo*

Meaning: to mark off by boundaries from, i.e. *set apart*. **Usage:** hold...aloof(1), ostracize(1), separate(2), separates(1), set...apart(1), set apart(2), take(1), took away(1)

Paul reinforces his purpose and passion for his call to be an apostle of the Good News Gospel. He sets the pattern for us to be set apart for God’s plan and purpose, not our own. Remember he was and we are Christ’s servant/slaves. Our focus is on Christ and His Kingdom, not ours. Having a clear sense of calling and purpose, as exemplified by Paul’s unwavering commitment to his apostolic mission, empowers Christians to boldly and effectively share the gospel, knowing their lives are directed by God’s greater plan. This Good News Gospel is centered on Jesus but it is not a new idea, but one rooted deeply in the Old Testament Holy Scriptures and teachings of the Prophets. Paul, as we are today, are part of an Ancient Faith Continuum "**called to belong to**

Jesus Christ" (v. 6)

3. The Message: A Powerful Gospel That Changes Everything

Romans 1:16...¹⁶ *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.*

Why would Paul be tempted to shame? - The cross is foolishness to the world (1 Cor 1:18-25) but it the very source of power and life to the believer.

The Gospel is Christological

- The gospel is not a program or philosophy—it's a Person: Jesus Christ
- He is both fully human (Son of David) and fully divine (Son of God)
- His resurrection declares His identity and validates His work (v. 4)

The Gospel is Powerful

- Not merely information, but transformation
- God's power (dynamite) to save. Not human wisdom or effort—God's power - Salvation = rescue, deliverance, wholeness
- Creates new life, new identity, new community

The Gospel is Universal

- "To the Jew first and also to the Greek" (v. 16)
- No ethnic, social, or moral barriers
- The scarlet thread reaches all nations (Gen 12:3; Rev 5:9)

4. The Means: Faith

Faith as the means by which we receive God's righteousness and live the Christian life.

Romans 1:17... *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."*

The Gospel is Received by Faith

- Not earned by works or merit
- Faith = trust, reliance, surrender to Christ
- "From faith for faith"—the Christian life begins and continues by faith

The Gospel Reveals God's Righteousness

- Not our righteousness, but God's
- Imputed (credited to us) and imparted (worked in us)
- Fulfills Old Testament promise

Habakkuk 2:4—"The righteous shall by faith"

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR A CHURCH ALIVE AND GROWING:

1. **IDENTITY:** We Are Gospel People
2. **PASSION:** We Are Eager to Share
3. **POWER:** We Depend on God, Not Ourselves
4. **UNITY:** We Welcome All Who Believe
5. **FAITH:** We Live by Faith, Not Sight

CLOSING CHALLENGE:

"A church alive and growing is a church unashamed of the gospel. This week, ask yourself:

- **Am I ashamed?** Where do I hide my faith or soften the message?
- **Am I eager?** Who is God calling me to share the good news with?
- **Am I living by faith?** What area of my life needs to trust God's power, not my own?"

TAKE -AWAY:

As we reflect on Romans 1:1-17, let's remember that being "Unashamed" means boldly embracing the gospel as God's power to save and transform every life—so let us live and share this good news with confidence, trusting that faith in Christ truly changes everything. The gospel is the power source. Stay connected. Stay alive. Stay growing.