



Romans: Life in Christ Study Guide

A Lot of Anticipation and a Little Apprehension

August 8, 2021

Romans 1:1-15

1Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be 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 all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. 9For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13I want you to know, brothers and sisters, 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 I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15— hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

1. Paul's letter to the Romans is arguably the most significant book of the Bible next to the four Gospels. Bible scholar, Dale Bruner, has labeled it the "Fifth Gospel." One could also make the case that it is the most significant letter *ever* written. In the weeks ahead, we'll discover why Romans receives such acclaim.
2. Begin your journey with Romans by reading the first fifteen verses at least twice. What do you discover in these opening paragraphs? Circle key words and phrases. What do you learn about Paul? Make a list.
3. Notice the phrase "obedience of faith" in v.5. How do *obedience* and *faith* go together? Think of an example of this pairing in your own life. Can you have one without the other?
4. Make a commitment this week to immerse yourself in Romans this fall. How will you do that? Invite the Holy Spirit, working through the "Fifth Gospel," to transform your life.

Reflections on Romans

The very existence of world Christianity is the result of God's call to a fire-breathing Saul of Tarsus, and the radical nature of this converted man's mission to embrace the far corners of the earth has never been superseded or equaled. God did a mighty work through his servant Paul. Without him we would never have known the full dimensions of God's project to reclaim the cosmos and everything in it for himself.

Fleming Rutledge from *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*

... if we have gained a true understanding of this epistle [letter], we have an open door to all the most profound treasures of Scripture.

John Calvin from his commentary on *Romans*

And when this letter arrived in Rome, hardly anyone read it, certainly no one of influence. There was much to read in Rome—imperial decrees, exquisite poetry, finely crafted moral philosophy—and much of it was world-class. And yet in no time, as such things go, this letter left all those other writings in the dust. Paul's letter to the Romans has had a far larger impact on its readers than the volumes of all those Roman writers put together.

Eugene Peterson from his preview of *Romans* in *The Message*

Perhaps the central practical issue Paul addresses in Romans is "What does it mean to be a diverse community of gentiles and Jews who have believed this gospel of the crucified and resurrected Messiah and been baptized into him?"

Mike Gorman from *Preaching Romans*

Next week: Romans 1:16-17