

Romans 1:5-17

“In Debt, Enthusiastic, and Unashamed”

Now you apply those words to say...70% of the female population with in the context of a Mall setting, and they become the ingredients that make for a man’s bankruptcy. [;o)] (I know it applies to men to, I’ve seen the commercial, the guy in the nice house/pool in the backyard/BBQ/nice riding mower/new vehicle, and he’s all, “I’m in debt up to my eyeballs!” But when those words are applied to someone who’s sold out to Jesus Christ understanding how he/she owes all that they are and all that they have to Him because of the price that He’s paid on their behalf, how they owe it to mankind to share the same life changing/soul saving message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified that transformed their lives. Infused with a sense of enthusiasm and excitement about getting the message out, mingled with an unashamed attribute of boldness concerning that message, *then* you have an incredible example as to what it means to lead a life set apart to God, His plan and His purpose for your life no strings attached. and (Along with so many other things) such is the portrait of Paul the apostle that the Holy Spirit has painted in this portion of scripture before us this morning. (and We’ll see that right towards the end of our time together).

Last week in our introduction to the book we looked at the 1st 4 vs. and In those vs we seen the *preacher* (Paul) we spoke of God’s *plan* (the gospel), how that plan was *promised* prior to its actual occurring. Really it was promised before the world was ever created, but God underscored that to humanity by spelling His promised plan out to us in His Word through His prophets hundreds, and thousands of yrs before that plan was implemented. and We spoke of the *person* that that promised plan centers around, how the gospel revolves around *not* a set of upstanding morals or any particular philosophical position, but rather it centers *around* and focuses *on* God’s Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who divulged His 100% humanity in that He was born into this world through the seed of David, and demonstrated His 100% deity by the resurrection from the dead. Now the resurrection didn’t *make* Him God in the flesh, it only validated the fact that He *was* God in the flesh. He didn’t come into existence on that day in Bethlehem when He was born in a manger because there was no room for Joseph and Mary in the inn. He existed before the world ever was as the 2nd person of the eternal Godhead. But He was made manifest in the flesh at that time and in that way.

Now as we continue on here vs 5 will speak to us of the *provision* we’ve been given through His person, and we’ll begin to see a little bit of the *purpose* for that provision. Vs 7 is the *proclamation* of grace and peace, and that’ll just about end our “P” words. Vs 8 Paul basically tells them that he’s *proud of* them, vs 9 speaks of Paul’s *praying for* them, vs 15 he’s *prepared to preach to* them. Let’s begin in vs1 so that we might continue to follow the flow reading through vs 7.

Vs1-7

So back there in vs 3,4 as Paul begins to speak of the person of the promise, Jesus Christ in vs 5 he begins to accent or underscore the essential importance of the person of God's Son our Lord as it relates to God's *provision in your life* and a certain aspect of His *purpose for your life*. Now the provision is grace, but that grace is provided through the *person* of Jesus Christ notice, it's "Through Him" that we have received grace. and This phrase "Through Him" becomes another important phrase to keep your eye open for in the book of Romans and really throughout your study of the NT period. Because essentially every aspect of your life and relationship to God is "funneled" (if you will) through Him, or *by Him, because of Him*, that's what this is speaking of here.

The fact that Jesus is singularly the instrumental individual, or the mediator of any and all things good between God and man as it pertains to your relationship with Him. Remember this vs, "...*there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*" 1 Tim 2:5 Jesus is the "go between" between God and man, every aspect of our relationship to God happens through, or by, or because of Jesus Christ "Through Him." Rom 5 tells us, "...*we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*" Rom 5:9 In Ch 8 we read in regards to all the perils and problems that enter into our lives, "*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*" Rom 8:37 The book of Eph tells us that our access by the Spirit to the Father comes through Him, "*For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*" Eph 2:18 The bible tells us that all things were created *through Him* and for Him, that when we're saved it's because we believe in God *through Him*. Remember Jesus said that He was the way the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through Him. 1 John 4:9 tells us that, "*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*" and Believe me that was just a smattering of an example as to how important it is that this "Through Him" principle become a practical inlet and overflow into and out through your life. I obviously didn't give you every scripture that highlights the various aspects of our relationship to God or to this life that are accessible to us *through Him*. I didn't even mention any scriptures that phrase it a little differently (i.e. "By Him, or Jesus Christ By whom, or through Jesus Christ, or any of those variations). and None of those examples dealt with the overwhelming provision for our lives that's provided for us in and through the person of God's Son that's before us in this vs, grace.

"Through Him we have received grace." That life changing, total transforming attribute of God that's able to bring salvation to your soul personally and sanctification to your life practically. It's by grace that we're saved; it's the *gift* of God not of works lest any man should boast. So the enormous, incomparable, non-fathomable work of salvation that God has accomplished on our behalf is the result of His grace, from there every gift, every equipping, every strengthening/sanctifying agent or power of God available to you is funneled into your life by His Spirit via this incredible attribute of God that the bible calls "Grace." How do I gain access to this grace? "Through Him" that is, grace is available to you in Christ, through Christ, by Christ, and because of Christ.

For what purpose, what's the purpose of God supplying us with such grace? See it there, it's sort of 2 reasons balled up in one statement, "For obedience to the faith among *all* nations for His name." Translation, the grace of God, through the gospel of Jesus Christ will have a life changing impact upon your life. Man left to himself is in a natural state of rebellion against God, but the grace of God received through Christ will translate into your life in the form of obedience to the faith. What *is* the faith? In this context we're speaking of the Word of God, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. It's speaking of that which is true or trustworthy, which in this context is a reference to the gospel message and all that it entails as found in the word of God. (and I just kinda skipped over the reference to apostleship because that was a specific manifestation of grace in Paul's life, with you it would be grace and whatever God has called you to or is working in you for His glory). But the purpose is for "obedience" don't miss that, in and of yourself you have no power, or ability to be obedient to God, His word, the faith, or however you want to phrase it, the bottom line is you can't uphold the standard *of* it. Why? Not only because God's word is righteous and my heart apart from grace is wicked, but the bible makes it clear that in and of myself I have no *desire* to obey, or for that matter to seek after God *at all*. The bible says, "*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*" Rom 3:10-12

So #1 in me, that is in my flesh there's nothing that is good, but #2 even if I wanted to obey I couldn't, because I'm an unrighteous individual seeking to uphold the righteous standard of the word of God, not just in an outward demonstration of discipline, but from an inward transformation of my heart. That's where the Pharisees went wrong, so often we get hung up thinking that God's Word is dealing with who I am physically when in reality it's dealing with who I am inwardly/spiritually. Remember Jesus said, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*" John 6:63 So God is looking for obedience *from the heart*, not just in an outward demonstration, but rather the result of an inward transformation. Because if God has you inwardly, everything outwardly will fall in line, but you can conform outwardly and still be a mess inwardly, God wants your heart.

But all that to say that a life that's come into personal contact with Jesus Christ and responded to the *gospel* of God will be made manifest in a life led in *obedience* to the *Word* of God. Now I realize that we're all in different places with regard to maturity and growth, but you show me someone with no inward conviction to lead a life of obedience to the word of God, and I'll show you a person who's never truly received the *gospel* of God, or at the very least has walked away from their relationship with God. Because it's impossible to have a relationship with God, by where you claim to love God, and have no desire to be obedient *to* God. Jesus said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" John 14:15

Or another way to understand that would be, “Your love *for* Me will evidence itself in your obedience *to* Me.” Another word for “obedience” here could be rendered, “Submission.” I like that, through Christ we receive grace for submission to the faith. As to where we naturally rebel *against* God, by grace we’re given the power to submit *to* God. What does that tell you? That when you disobey or don’t submit to God’s Word (as a believer), it’s not because God hasn’t supplied you the power, it’s because you’ve made your own choice to do what *you* want to do rather than submit to what God would *have* you to do. Because through Christ He’s given you grace for obedience.

Notice that that grace is to be spread out among *all* nations, which simply means the gospel is for every culture, every ethnic group, everywhere at any time. For God so loved the world he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes upon Him would never perish but have everlasting life. and What’s the consequent results of your obedience? His glory, it’s for His name that He’s done these things. Now sometimes we think that God must be egocentric doing all of these things for His glory, but that’s because we project our fallen, corrupt motives onto a Holy and righteous God. We forget the very essence of the love of God is other’s oriented, not self-centered. But the culmination, of your transformation/salvation, is God’s glorification. Ephesians tells us that we’ve been raised up together *with* Christ and made to sit in the heavenly places *in* Christ, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. In other words, your salvation = God’s glorification, it’s for His name. So the gospel is for all nations

Vs6

Now we’ll save our comments regarding election for a future study, there’ll be plenty of opportunity for that later. Suffice it for now to say that the gospel has gone out to them, they’d responded to it, and that bears witness to the fact that God has called them. How do you know if God has called you? When you hear the gospel, give your heart to Jesus Christ and you’ll find out that God has called you as well.

Vs7

Now we notice that it’s addressed specifically to Rome, feel free to personalize that, “To all who are in Joplin,” or wherever you happen to live, Paul is writing to believers here, so if you’re a believer this is to you. 2 Things here in this initial greeting to see for yourself, #1 You’re beloved of God, #2 In Christ you’re a saint. Those words, “to be” aren’t in the Greek, it’s simply, “Called Saints” often times when the translators try to clarify an issue they only cloud/confuse it. You’re not called *to be* a saint, if you’re in Christ *you are* a saint. Often times the word “Saint” brings to mind great spiritual giants of the past whom the “Church” has dubbed with the special honor of being recognized as a saint. But that’s not biblical, biblically there are only 2 kinds of people, “Saints” and “Ain’t’s” if you’re in Christ, you’re a saint, and if you’re not, you’re an “ain’t.” Doesn’t mean that you’re practically perfect, but positionally in Christ you’re exactly that, when God looks at you He sees the perfection of Christ that’s been imputed to you.

This sort of correlates with the idea of not being saved by good works, but being saved *unto* good works. You don't become a saint by acting saintly, but because we are saints we should manifest saintliness. The story is told of an old church with stain glass windows with St Paul, and St Peter and the like on them, one day the Sunday school teacher asked his class, "What are saints?" A little boy pipes up, "They're the people who the light shines through." Good answer. If God has grabbed hold of your heart that'll be manifest by the way you live your life. The light of Jesus will be shining through you. Doesn't mean you'll never make mistakes, but that the pattern of your life lends itself to godliness. So positionally the work is perfected, practically it's a progressive work of forgiveness, renewal, transformation, and sanctification which will have it's culmination on the day we see Him face to face, then we shall be like Him for we will see Him as He is.

"Grace to You and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" The Siamese twins of the NT, "Grace and Peace" always coupled together and always in that order. Now we've spoken a bit on the grace of God, some see in it an acronym "G.od's R.iches A.t C.hrist's E.xpense" and that's a pretty good definition, unmerited favor upon your life, that's grace. But the order is significant as well because as you know you can't experience the peace of God until you've 1st experience the grace of God. As we've already discussed it's the grace of God that brings salvation, and until you've come to that point of receiving God's grace as unto salvation, you can't know true peace. "*There is no peace, says the LORD, for the wicked.*" Isa 48:22 Because the bible tells us that Jesus Christ Himself is our peace, so until you've received God's grace, you can't know God's peace.

The idea of God's peace is 2-fold as well, for instance I can have peace *with* God, yet not be experiencing the peace *of* God. We'll read later on, "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*" Rom 5:1 (There's another one of those "through Him" statements, we have peace with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ) So again positionally upon receiving Christ I am at peace with God, on my own I was at enmity *against* God, but through Christ I'm at peace *with* God. I'm not fighting Him any more, but I still go through times where I know the peace *of* God isn't ruling in my heart. That comes when I quit trying to do everything, or figure everything out on my own and truly submit my circumstances over to Him in prayer and leave it there, then I can have the peace *of* God at work in my life because I'm no longer worried about it, it's in His hands. Paul put it like this, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" Phil 4:6-7

So it's when I exchange my anxiety and worry for prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, being thankful that God is in control and I can trust Him even when it seems like my situation is out of control, that the peace of God will begin to settle down and take root in my heart. (Lets move on)

Vs8-10

Obviously there's a lot in these vs, however there are 2 things primarily that I'd have you to see, #1 Paul was thankful for them #2 Paul was prayerful for them. So moving out of sharing his credentials with them, he begins to express his concern for them, but these 2 things as you study Paul's life begin to surface as common qualities that were found in him, thankfulness, and prayerfulness. He was never without a reason to give God thanks, to the Thessalonians he wrote, "*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" 1 Thess 5:16-18 and He was a man who practiced what he preached, here we find him thanking God for their good witness, is your witness something we can be thankful for? Paul was thankful for their witness. They were a high profile church, right there in the capital of the known world, Paul was excited that they were accurately representing the heart of God and the person of Jesus Christ Because they were strategically located, we talked about this last week, they had a unique opportunity to influence the known empire from where they were at as people passed through, got saved and returned home taking the gospel with them. and Paul says, "I'm so thankful that your faith is spoken of, is renowned throughout the entire empire." What an incredible witness, God help us. and In Vs 9, not only did he thank God *for* them, he made mention *of* them in his prayers, and notice that he used both the negative and the positive to emphasize how much, to the negative "with out ceasing" to the positive, "always". What an incredible example to follow, that we would be a people who understood this term "with out ceasing" and were persistent in praying for those people and places that God brought into our lives or placed on our hearts.

2 other things to see real quick in vs 9, notice how it is that Paul serves the Lord, he says, "with my spirit." Jesus said, "*...the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*" John 4:23-24 The idea there being, "From the deepest recess of my heart." That's how we're to serve the Lord, from the heart, out of an overflow of love for God, I serve Him, not out of a legal regimen, but out of a loving relationship. As a Pharisee Paul used to try and do the work of God in the efforts of his flesh out of legalism. Now he serves the Lord with his spirit (that is) from his heart out of love. The 2nd thing super quick, notice whose gospel he says it is in which he serves, The gospel of His Son, God's Son. In vs 1 he called it the gospel of God, here in vs 9 he calls it the gospel of God's Son, do we have a quandary, no, but rather further confirmation that Jesus is God, so see that there, the equality of the Father and the Son as God.

Vs 10 tells us his personal prayer request, notice it was 2 fold, first of all that he might find "some means" to come to them. He didn't care how he got there as long as he got there, only 1 stipulation, the 2nd thing he wanted to make sure that it was in the will of God.

Now having just come out of the book of Acts we don't need to explore the means how he got there, but I want you to see that when he uttered those words "some means" he was giving God a blank check (if you will) telling Him to fill it out however He felt the need in order to get him there. His prayer was *direct* but it wasn't *directive*, it was a "Not my will but Yours be done" type request. and "Some means" aren't always "Ideal means" humanly speaking. I doubt that Paul had it in mind to be traveling to Rome in chains as a prisoner, being caught in a hurricane, driven in the open sea for at least 14 days being blown 500 miles off course only to have your ship ultimately sunk, washing up on the shore of some island, surviving the shipwreck to be bitten by a venomous viper in mind when he wrote this letter as to the means he'd make it to Rome. But God radically blessed that journey and made an eternal difference in no small amount of lives.

So Paul made it to Rome "in the will of God" God answered his prayer, just not in the way he probably envisioned it. Which is typical with God, His ways aren't our ways, He chooses paths for our lives that we'd have never comprehended on our own.

Vs11-12

The idea here is exactly what it says, Paul wasn't the head of "All about me" ministries. As though he was riding in on a white horse to be their spiritual hero, he says I'm looking forward to establishing and encouraging one another. I want to bless you, but I know I'm going to be blessed by you. and Such is the nature of body life, establishing and encouraging one another, which is another reason why it's so vital to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. If one so spiritually unrivaled (humanly speaking) as the apostle Paul saw the essential need for the mutual benefits in corporate fellowship, how much more do we need to fellowship with establish, and encourage one another as we gather together collectively?

Vs13-17

This is where that portrait that we began our time speaking of today begins to unfold before us, the 3 "I am" statements of Paul the apostle here. Vs 14 I am a debtor, Vs 15 I am ready, and vs 16 I am not ashamed "In debt, Enthusiastic, and Unashamed" these are the words that describe the life of a man who gave everything that was with in him for the propulsion of the gospel of Jesus Christ He understood that God made Himself known to that we might make Him known to others, and having come into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ ourselves we owe it to mankind to share the gospel with them. I've said it often, I'm sure glad someone was willing to share the gospel with me, now God forbid that I should withhold that same truth from others. But not only did Paul have that sense of debt, that he owed it to the world to share the gospel with them, but he was excited about the opportunity, "...as much as is in me I am ready preach the gospel." Anywhere at anytime, in season and out of season, why? Because he wasn't ashamed, embarrassed, or uncomfortable about the gospel, because it's the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. (Vs 17)

We obviously haven't really tapped into these vs here, but we're going to stop here for today and pick up in these vs next time so that we won't have to rush *through* them but can take the time to hopefully glean *from* them what it is that God would have us to receive *in* them.

Prayer Points:

God there's all kinds of *information* that we've considered today, but God help us to take that information and allow You to turn it to *application* in our lives. That we might be a people of prayer, serving you from the deepest recesses of our hearts, not out of legal obligation, but from a loving relationship with You. and I pray for anyone who perhaps has peace with You, but not the peace *of* You ruling in their hearts that you might take their burdens today and give them Your peace. Help us to lead lives worthy of the calling with which You've called us, and may we walk in the grace that we've received through You Jesus, for obedience/submission to the faith.

If you're here and you've never received that grace, God wants to come into your life today and by His grace forgive your sin and make you brand new. You need to understand that God loves you, shed His blood upon the cross for you, He was delivered up to death for your transgression and He was raised for your justification. You can stand justified before God in Christ today...