

## Start your study here

<b>Read</b> Read, Record, Reflect, Respond		<b>Observation</b>										
<b>Prayerfully</b>	Conscious dependence	<input type="checkbox"/> What does it say? <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Probe</td> <td><b>Mark</b>—people, place, key word</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discover</td> <td><b>List</b>—observations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detect</td> <td><b>Summarize</b>—main point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Explore</td> <td><b>Identify</b>—what you learn about God</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><b>Apply</b>—“So what?”</td> </tr> </table>	Probe	<b>Mark</b> —people, place, key word	Discover	<b>List</b> —observations	Detect	<b>Summarize</b> —main point	Explore	<b>Identify</b> —what you learn about God		<b>Apply</b> —“So what?”
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	<b>Apply</b> —“So what?”											
<b>Reflectively</b>	Constantly											
<b>Extensively</b>	Background issues Big Idea Basic structure and flow Broad strokes											
<b>Creatively</b>	Imagination and View points											
<b>Intensively</b>	Questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How. . . <b>Repeated</b> <b>Alike</b> <b>Different</b> <b>Accentuated</b> <b>Related</b>											
<b>Specifically</b>	Purposefully—with the view of the author in mind											
<b>Effectively</b>	By unit of thought— <b>Think</b> <b>Context!</b> Details, ask questions											

### Romans 1:8-17

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 want you to know, 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.

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 for faith,  
as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (ESV)

**Series:** Romans: The Transforming Power of the Righteousness of God  
**Review:** Paul and His ministry (review the introductory material provided)  
**Observations:**  
 Identify Paul's purpose in writing the letter (at least 4 points listed)  
**Key Question:**  
 Our society values individualism (which for many becomes isolation), the NT teaches us that we are part of a family, an organism—which impacts us most, society or Scripture?

**Process**  
 Observations of text  
 Specific issues to be aware of (see commentary)  
 Clarification  
 Key Point  
 About God

**Outline:**  
 1:8 Thanksgiving  
 1:9-10 Prayer  
 1:11-15 Content of prayer  
 1:16-17 Theme of the book

**Romans 1:8-17**

**Thanksgiving** 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. This is not just a personal thanksgiving, but an Apostolic (1:1, 7)

**Prayer** 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, Echoes of 1:1-5  
 that without ceasing I mention you Intercession for them

10 always in my prayers, Petition for self  
 asking that somehow by God's will As 1:8, the prayer is not simply personal— but tied to his apostolic commission 1:1, 5-7  
 I may now at last succeed in coming to you. "spiritual gift of grace for the purpose of strengthen you" 16:25; 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Thess 2:17

**Desire** 11 For I long to see you, Even Paul needed mutual encouragement  
 ① that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you to come along side of one another  
 12 ② that is, that we may be mutually encouraged What inspires and fortifies other believers is when they perceive faith in other Christians. Seeing other believers trust God in the course of everyday life reminds us that God is indeed faithful and encourages us to trust him as well. (Schreiner)  
 by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

13 I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented),  
 ③ in order that I may reap some harvest among you ethnos—nations, just as in 1:5, Again apostolic mission is in mind, not just ministry in Rome, but beyond  
 as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. Apostolic commission, his call mandates it, 1 Cor 9:16

14 ④ I am under obligation Greek and non-Greek nations—Point this gospel is for ALL, and Paul's focus is the Gentiles  
 both to Greeks and to barbarians,  
 both to the wise and to the foolish.

15 ④ So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. Not just "evangelism" but 1:5 "obedience of faith" – this is tied to "strengthen you" 1:11

**Theme** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, I Cor 1:18; 2:5  
 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." (ESV) 1:18-20  
3:21-26

1:8	I thank	personal
1:9	I serve	committed
	I mention/remember	sold out to what he is doing
	I may come	
1:10	My prayers (I pray (NASB)	submitted (1:10, 13)
1:11	I long to see	personal
1:11	I may impart	humble
1:12	I may be encouraged	purposeful
1:13	I might harvest	
1:14	I am obligated	purposeful, determined
1:15	I am eager (ready) to preach	passionate
1:16	I am not ashamed	focused

- 4 Key Desires/Reasons for wanting to visit
- ① to strengthen you
  - ② for mutual encouragement
  - ③ in order to reap a harvest among you
  - ④ under obligation, therefore eager to preach gospel
- Two Key Focal Areas
1. Mutual encouragement
  2. Priority and Passion to proclaim the gospel

**Working Idea** (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Paul is thankful for the Romans, well known for their faith, and longs to visit them so that

he might strengthen them,  
they might mutually encourage each other,  
he might reap a harvest among the Gentiles  
(and they may extend his ministry to the Gentiles)  
he might preach to all in Rome

Strength comes from mutual encouragement, and that which strengthens and encourages other believers is faith. Paul's emphasis on mutual encouragement may foreshadow his exhortation to unity in Rom. 14:1–15:13.<sup>10</sup> Paul certainly wants to communicate a spiritual gift to fortify Roman believers (v. 11) and see mutual edification occur (v. 12), and such strengthening and edification are part of what is involved in proclaiming the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

We should desire (without shame) to share the gospel with all

It is the power of God  
It reveals the righteousness of God

The motivation for sharing the gospel with all comes from knowing that it is God's power and reveals God's righteousness.

Remember, the gospel is powerful; it reveals God's righteousness—share it.

Share the truth/gospel, let God reveal His righteousness and transform lives.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel—are we?

Do we fear rejection?

Paul told Timothy that he was not ashamed of the gospel including the suffering produced by the gospel

<sup>2</sup> Timothy 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, (ESV)

**Main idea:**

Paul desires to visit the Romans to strength them and share the gospel—of which he is not ashamed—because it is the saving power of God in which the righteousness of God is revealed.

**Teaching idea:**

We need mutual encouragement  
We need to share the gospel

**Objectives:** The student will be able, by the end of this lesson, to:

1. understand Paul's desire to visit the Christians in Rome
2. understand the theme of the letter

*What do I want them to know?*

Even the purposeful “fearless” Apostle Paul needed to be encouraged to carry out his mission

*Why do I want them to know it?*

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<sup>10</sup> Reid (1995: 189–90) maintains that this verse should be given a more prominent role in discerning the purpose of the letter.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998). 54.

So that we will see the value of mutual encouragement not just for our comfort but our commission

*What do I want them to do?*

Through mutual encouragement, share the transforming power of the righteousness of God

*Why do I want them to do it?*

So that God's righteousness can be revealed

### **Key Phrase / Catch Phrase:**

The book is about the gospel  
Transforming power of the righteousness of God  
Share it

### **Outline**

Hard to outline because

Paul starts a thanksgiving and it becomes a prayer

Paul starts a prayer for his readers and it becomes a prayer for him to visit them

Paul starts a prayer to visit his readers and stops to explain why he wants to visit them

- A. Paul's interest in the Romans: Thanksgiving and Prayer 1:8-15
  - 1. Proof of Paul's interest: Thanksgiving 1:8
  - 2. Proof of Paul's interest: Prayer 1:9-10
  - 3. Paul's intent to visit 1:11-15
    - a. Personal desire 1:11-12
      - (1) "Impart a spiritual gift" that you may be established
      - (2) To be "mutually encouraged by each other's faith"
    - b. Desire to visit—Explanation 1:13-15
      - (1) To reap a harvest
      - (2) Under obligation to all
      - (3) Summary: Eager to preach in Rome
- B. The Theme: The gospel is the saving power of God in which the righteousness of God is revealed 1:16-17 *Purpose of the Epistle*
  - 1. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation through faith 1:16
  - 2. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God designed by faith 1:17

### **Key Question:**

Do you find it easy to share the gospel? When have you found it easy to share the gospel?

### **Review and Preview (5 minutes)**

Last week we learned that just as Paul had a specific calling, we too are on a mission for God. We are to be proclaimers of the gospel—Proclaim Jesus for the obedience of faith, for the sake of His name among all nations.

This week we will learn about the corporate aspect of being proclaimers as well as begin to understand the theme of Romans.

### **Introduction**

Adults learn what they want to learn or stated another way, they learn in areas of felt needs. This lesson will address both the fear of failure and fear of sharing the gospel

Let me ask you a question:

Do we really need others?

When we are saved we are saved into a family, a body, a building, household, community and assembly (all metaphors used for the church).

And counter to our American individualism and resulting isolation, the church should be a place of mutual encouragement and ministry.

Turn to the person next to you and share:

*What is the most encouraging thing anyone has done for you?*

*Why was it encouraging?*

As we complete the introductory section, Paul will tell us why he wanted to visit Rome. As we move our way through this section, we want to observe two key things:

What Paul's personal and pastoral motivation was.

How Paul describes the theme of the book.

And as we look at these two key observations we will learn something about ourselves and something about the Gospel.

Before we move into the text, let me ask you another question:

*Do you find it easy to share the gospel?*

*When have you found it easy to share the gospel?*

Now, let's see how those questions will help us understand Paul and his desire to go to Rome and why he wrote this letter.

## Exposition and Key Exegetical Issues to be aware of:

### Engaging activity that extend the thinking

#### I. Prologue 1:1-17

##### A. Introduction of author, message and Savior 1:1-7



Think about it

In this section we want to focus on two aspects:  
Paul's desire to visit and what he hoped to accomplish  
Mutual encouragement  
Preach the gospel  
Paul's reason for preaching the gospel  
It is the power of God unto salvation through faith  
It reveals the righteousness of God designed by faith  
Due to time focus primarily on 1:11-13 and 1:16-17

Identify Paul's reasons for wanting to visit Rome



Teacher's Note: Paul lists a number of reasons. After getting class members to list the various items [there are at least 4]—try to identify 1) a summary statement 2) what is unique to Paul and what should be true of us

Passion for proclaiming the gospel 1:8-17

##### B. Paul's interest in the Romans: Thanksgiving and Prayer 1:8-15

###### 1. Proof of interest: Thanksgiving 1:8

Faith proclaimed through the world 1:8

Is ours as a church? Individually?

###### 2. Proof of interest: Prayer 1:9-10

a. Consistent prayer for them

b. Constant request for God's willing enablement to visit

1:10 and 13 raise interesting questions about prayer

“The following observations are pertinent.

The apostle entertained an ardent desire which he made the subject of specific request to God but concerning which he did not have certitude that it was God’s decreative and providential will to fulfill.

1. The fulfillment of this desire and request had been repeatedly frustrated by the providence of God (vs. 13).
2. He did not for this reason cease to entertain the desire and make request for its fulfillment.
3. He must have been persuaded that it was consonant with the revealed will of God and, specifically, with his apostolic commission to entertain the desire and always in his prayer to make it the subject of request to God.
4. He resigns himself completely to the will of God in this matter—this is the import of “by the will of God.” The emphasis rests upon the providential will of God. But it is inconceivable that he could have desired a providential order of the event in violation of what would have been in accord with God’s perceptive good pleasure. The latter is presupposed in the desire and the request.
5. The importunity of request is not incompatible with uncertainty as to the final outcome in the ordained providence of God.”<sup>2</sup>

3. Paul’s intent to visit 1:11-15

a. Personal desire 1:11-12

Longs to minister—Why?

(1) ① “Impart a spiritual gift” that you may be established

One of Paul’s reasons for wanting to visit the Romans involves his desire to impart, be used of the Spirit to provide, what the saints in Rome needed which would strengthen them.

1:11

“impart to you a spiritual gift”

Unfortunately in evangelical circles we have narrowed the meaning of “spiritual gift” to a specific personal enablement for service, when the basic meaning is “spiritual grace gift.” And Paul probably has this broader meaning in mind, particularly since he uses the singular form and then explains it with “to strengthen you.”

Most likely a generic *gift of grace* not “spiritual gifts” in terms of what Paul will write about in chapter 12. To bestow a blessing, *i.e.* to strengthen them through his ministry.

1. The term “gift” is singular not plural.
2. Paul is not the one who bestows the gift. And Paul adds the fact that when he visits the Romans there will be mutual edification (1:12) not Paul giving them something only.
3. The Holy Spirit gifts people at the time of conversion and gives the church what it needs to accomplish its purpose if people submit and serve.

**1 Corinthians 1:7** so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, (ESV)

**1 Corinthians 12:11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (ESV)

4. The use of *carisma* is not related to spiritual gifts

Salvation as a *carisma* (gift of grace)

**Romans 5:15-16** But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass

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<sup>2</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959, 1965). p. 21.

brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. (ESV)

**2 Corinthians 1:11** You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. (ESV)

**sn** Paul does not mean here that he is going to bestow upon the Roman believers what is commonly known as a “spiritual gift,” that is, a special enabling for service given to believers by the Holy Spirit. Instead, this is either a metonymy of cause for effect (Paul will use his own spiritual gifts to edify the Romans), or it simply means something akin to a blessing or benefit in the spiritual realm. It is possible that Paul uses this phrase to connote specifically the broader purpose of his letter, which is for the Romans to understand his gospel, but this seems less likely.<sup>3</sup>

A *spiritual blessing* (literal “spiritual gift”) may refer either to a gift, favor, or blessing from the Spirit of God, or to that which is related to one’s (human) spirit. Most commentators tend to accept the former of these two interpretations. Paul further discusses this matter of spiritual gifts in 12.6–8.

The equivalent to an expression *in order to share a spiritual blessing with you* may be “in order that I may cause you to have a blessing from God’s Spirit” or “in order that I may share with you the goodness that God gives by means of his Spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

- (2) ② To be “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith”  
Ministry is about people

Ministry is taking God’s Word to people’s life situations  
Fluency with God’s Word in life situations



Talk about it

How are individuals mutually encouraged by each other’s faith?  
What does this look like?  
What environments are necessary for this to happen?

From this we can see that for Paul ministry was—*about people*

And we will see in the next section that ministry is—*taking God’s Word to people’s life situations*

Therefore for us to truly mutually encourage each other, we need to be fluent with God’s Word and involved with people.

***Fluency with God’s Word in life situations***

This little motto is one of the goals of our study of the book of Romans. That we will grow in our fluency with God’s Word—that is, that we would be growing in our understanding of God and His Word to the point that it naturally flows from our lips. But that we will also know and love people so that what flows is not only truth, but as Paul states it in **Ephesians 4:29**

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (ESV)

<sup>3</sup>Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006; 2006). Ro 1:11.

<sup>4</sup>Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994). 16.

This mutual ministry requires intentional relationships for growth. Not just teaching environments like an ABF, but more personal interaction.

That leads us to the theme of the book.

- b. Desire to visit—explanation 1:13-15  
(Previously prevented)  
Longs to visit—Why?
- (1) ③ To reap a harvest—  
(Not producing a harvest, only God can do that, but reaping or gathering a harvest)  
Among—you  
Rest of the Gentiles  
Reveals that while there were Jews in the congregations, he is writing to a largely Gentile audience, and as the apostle to the Gentiles, he has a great burden for them
- Explanation
- (2) Under obligation to all  
A reference to his apostolic call and commission  
1:1 slave of Christ  
1:5 charged with job of spreading the gospel
- Illustration  
If I borrow \$100,000 from you, I owe you. But if you want the money to go to a third party—I am indebted to you until I give it to them.
- That seems to be Paul’s thought process. He is indebted to God and pays his debt through ministry to the Gentiles.
- Please don’t take my analogy too far. Paul is not paying for his salvation, but responding to God by serving others.
- (3) ④ Summary: Eager to preach in Rome
- C. The theme: The gospel is the saving power of God in which the righteousness of God is revealed 1:16-17

Teacher’s Note: See the study notes for the outline, observations and flow, what follows are a few questions to help you engage your class. (There is a diagram at the end of this lesson plan that you may choose to turn into an overhead.)

Notice that in the theme, there are two truths about the gospel that Paul focuses on.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation through faith 1:16  
Why describe the gospel as the “power of God unto salvation?”



Talk about it

The gospel reveals the righteousness of God designed by faith 1:17  
How is the righteousness of God revealed?

Though we will look at this very key passage in greater detail later, it seems appropriate to read it simply to better understand how the righteousness of God is revealed.

**Romans 3:21-26**

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: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of 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. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (ESV)

Reason desire to visit “For”

1. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation through faith

1:16

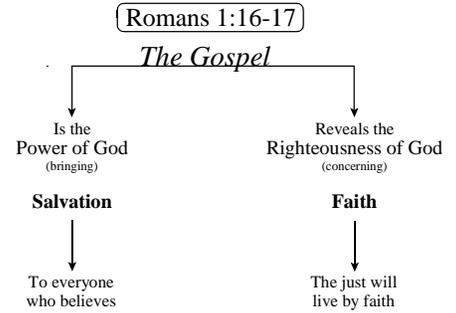
Power of God—for salvation

only means of salvation  
for all

(method or approach)

Jew first

Greek also



- a. Paul’s courage—not ashamed of the Gospel  
Why he is ready to preach the gospel—He is not ashamed.

He has stated that he is eager or ready to share the gospel. The reason is because he is not ashamed of the gospel or of sharing it (even though it may appear as foolishness at times 1 Corinthians 1:18-21).

- b. The gospel (good news, evangelism) is the power of God  
See 2 Timothy 1:8 (8-11)

Why he is not ashamed of the Gospel—it is the power of God for salvation

The gospel message is the subject

The message is the power of God, God saves through the power of the message.<sup>5</sup>

dunamij (infinite resources, spiritual ability)

The power is that which belongs to God.

Therefore the reference is to the omnipotence of God!!! That is what saves.

The gospel enables all of God’s divine resources to be used to provide salvation.

In the Bible “salvation” (whether in the Old Testament sense of deliverance or eternal provision of a relationship with God, i.e. pardon and life) is always viewed as requiring God’s intervention and strength.

Salvation

Negative: Saved from sin and death

Positive: Saved to righteousness and life

A simple definition: pardon and life

Pardon is the forgiveness of sin and declaration of righteousness.

Life is the relationship with God now (including the gift of the Holy Spirit's indwelling) and for eternity.

The various aspects and benefits will be developed throughout the Epistle.

<sup>5</sup> Murray, p. 27.

c. The method—to the Jew first, then for the Greek

(1) To those who believe

The gospel is not universal—not all get it

The gospel is not unconditional though it will work out

Cannot obtain apart from faith

While God is proactive in salvation, Christ's righteousness is not ours apart from faith.<sup>6</sup>

To everyone—no discrimination by culture, race and no obstacle the power of God cannot overcome.

(2) Priority of the Jews

The method—to the Jew first, then for the Greek (Ελληνη—a person of Greek language and culture, Gentile, pagan)

Related to time: Christ came first to the Jew (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 13:46)

Related to priority: The promises of salvation were first made to the Jew and was of the Jew (John 4:22; Acts 2:39; Romans 3:1-2; 9:4-5)

Related to method: Paul always started with the Jews then moved to the Gentiles when the Jews rejected (See Acts 14:1; 17:2)

“Because the Jews were God's Chosen People (11:1), the custodians of God's revelation (3:2), and the people through whom Christ came (9:5), they have a preference of privilege expressed historically in a chronological priority. As the Lord Jesus stated it, "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). In Paul's ministry he sought out the Jews first in every new city (Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8). Three times he responded to their rejection of his message by turning to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:25-28; cf. comments on Eph. 1:12). Today evangelism of the world must include the Jews, but the priority of the Jews has been fulfilled.”<sup>7</sup>

2. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God designed by faith 1:17

Why the gospel is the power of God unto salvation—it reveals God's righteousness,

a. Righteousness of God revealed

δικαιοσύνη—righteousness, justice

θεοῦ—Subjective genitive—the righteousness that God provides

Here Paul uses it not as God's attribute (though the concept is not absent) of justice, but the justification that comes from Him.

The righteousness referred to is God's (God-righteousness)<sup>8</sup>

He is the Author

It requires His approval

It meets all His holy demands

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<sup>6</sup> Murray, p. 27 Footnote 21 “The priority of effectual calling and of regeneration in the *ordo salutis* should not be allowed to prejudice this truth either in our thinking or in the preaching of the gospel. It is true that regeneration is causally prior to faith. But it is only *causally* prior and the adult person who is regenerated always exercises faith. Hence the salvation which is of the gospel is never ours apart from faith. This is true even in the case of infants, for in regeneration the germ of faith is implanted. There is order in the application of redemption, but it is order in that which constitutes an indissoluble unity comprising a variety of elements. It is salvation in its integral unity of which the apostle speaks and this is never ours without faith—we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). The person who is *merely* regenerate is not saved, the simple reason being that there is no such person. The saved person is *also* called, justified, and adopted. It is not only pertinent to the apostle's doctrine of salvation that he should lay such emphasis upon faith but also particularly appropriate to what is the leading theme of the early part of this epistle, namely, justification. It is preeminently in connection with justification that the accent falls upon faith.”

<sup>7</sup> Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B. (1983, 1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, John Witmer, p. 441

<sup>8</sup> Murray, p. 31.

The righteousness of God as His attribute

Romans 3:5, 25-26

“In the Hebrew tradition, early and late, Gods’ righteousness is the way he acts, and notably the way he acts in maintaining the covenant.”<sup>9</sup>

The concept not only includes God’s character but His actions.

The salvation God provides is in keeping with His character. “A God kind of righteousness.”

Revealed

“. . . in the gospel the righteousness of God is actively and dynamically brought to bear upon man’s sinful situation; it is not merely that it is made known as to its character to human apprehension but that it is manifest in its saving efficacy.”<sup>10</sup>

1:17

Is the righteousness of God the “center” of Romans and of Paul’s thought? Moo says it is a very important theme, but it is not the center. He sees salvation history or Christology as more central in Pauline thought and argues that the gospel is the theme of Romans. Moo is correct in not ascribing central status to justification and in perceiving the importance of salvation history and Christology. Justification falls under the umbrella of redemptive history instead of vice versa. Perhaps some have been tempted to identify justification as the center because of the historic debate between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Scholars such as Wrede and Schweitzer, on the other hand, were surely wrong to minimize the significance of justification, and Moo is much more balanced in concluding that righteousness is a very significant theme in Romans without being the center. Whether the gospel is the theme of Romans is more controversial, though Moo makes a good case for his thesis. The focus on the gospel in Rom 1:1, 16 certainly makes his suggestion attractive (cf. also 16:25). There is also little doubt that Romans contains an exposition of Paul’s gospel. The gospel may be the leading theme in Romans, but it is not in my opinion the fundamental theme. The reason Paul expounds his gospel and engages in his ministry is so that God will be honored (1:5; 16:27). The root sin of human beings is their failure to honor and glorify God (1:21). Righteousness is by faith, and faith is so significant because it honors and glorifies God as the one who can meet every need (4:20). After Paul recounts God’s plan in salvation history relative to Jews and Gentiles (9:1–11:35) he breaks into praise, giving God the glory for working out history with such wisdom (11:36). Paul focuses upon the gospel precisely because it brings praise and honor to God. Indeed, the book ends with the theme of God’s glory (16:27). As Schlatter says, “Could there be a more fitting conclusion for Romans than *soli deo gloria?*”<sup>11</sup>

b. By faith from first to last

By faith for transformation

ek pisteoj eij pistin “Out of faith in reference to faith”

From faith to faith

Salvation begins and is continued by faith

c. Habakkuk 2:4

Righteousness lived by faith (Emphasis is on living)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> EBC, Harrison, quoting Ziesler, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Murray, p. 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> Schlatter, *Romans* 280.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Schreiner, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 41* (December 1998) 41:648-649.

<sup>12</sup> Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B. (1983, 1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Yahweh then declared that a **righteous** person, by stark contrast, **will live by his faith** (“steadfastness or faithfulness”). A righteous Israelite who remained loyal to God’s moral precepts and was humble before the Lord enjoyed God’s abundant life. To “live” meant to experience God’s

“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. (ESV)

There is some question about the word order  
The righteous by faith shall live — Sanctification  
The righteous shall live by faith — Justification

Why does he call them righteous?

Paul also quotes it in Galatians 3:11 with the idea of justification is apart from the Law by faith.

Here at the beginning of his Epistle, where he will discuss man’s problem and how to obtain salvation, lends to understanding this quote in the same manner as Galatians 3:11.

Paul’s use of Old Testament for his theme (we don’t know for sure, it could be a combination of a number of passages)

**Psalm 98:1-2** A Psalm. Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. 2 The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. (ESV)

**Isaiah 46:13** I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.” (ESV)

**Isaiah 51:5-8** My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed. 7 “Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.” (ESV)

**Isaiah 56:1** Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. (ESV)

**Isaiah 62:1** For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. (ESV)



Talk about it

So, the theme of the book (1:16-17) is

The gospel is the transforming power of God in which God’s righteousness is revealed

But in the context, the theme is not just theological truth—though Paul will teach us much about the gospel, the power of God, God’s righteousness and faith—for Paul it is something that must be shared without shame.

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blessing by enjoying a life of security, protection, and fullness. Conversely, an apparently victorious but proud and perverse Babylonian would die. Faithfulness (NIV marg.) and faith are related. One who trusts in the Lord is one who relies on Him and is faithful to Him.

The key clause “the righteous will live by his faith” sparkles like a diamond in a pile of soot. In the midst of God’s unrelenting condemnations of Babylon stands a bright revelation of God’s favor that is quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). In those passages the words “will live” have a broader meaning than in Habakkuk. In the New Testament they mean to enjoy salvation and eternal life. In contrast with the self-reliant, boastful ways of the unrighteous, the righteous are found to be reliant on God and faithful to Him.

As we move through the book, our hope is that we will be overwhelmed, as Paul was, with gratitude for what God has done through the gospel. And that our gratitude will overflow so that we share the transforming power of the righteousness of God—the gospel.

*What encouragement do you draw from this passage?*

*What key truths about the gospel do we need to remember?*

### Key Point

1:12 Mutual ministry

Intentional relationships for growth

1:16-17 Theme of the book

Share the transforming power of the righteousness of God



What do we learn  
about God

God is righteous

God's message, the gospel is powerful, therefore He must be powerful

God desires to save people



Act on it

### Application

Most of us are fearful when it comes to sharing the gospel.

We fear being rejected.

We fear not having the right words to say

We fear not having answers to difficult questions

*How can we mutually encourage each other's faith so that we share the wonderful message of the power of God?*

Romans 1:16-17

*The Gospel*

Is the  
**Power of God**  
(bringing)

**Salvation**

To everyone  
who believes

Reveals the  
**Righteousness of God**  
(concerning)

**Faith**

The just will  
live by faith