

## The Roman Road Week 1: Church Words

We are beginning a new summer teacher series called **The Roman Road**. We will be going through the book of Romans, which is a letter from the Apostle Paul to a church in Rome. The name is to communicate that we are going to **walk through this part of the Bible together**. During the time of the Roman Empire, they **built an extensive system of roads** used to connect this vast empire together for the purpose of moving their armies quickly to wherever they were needed. Also, these roads were used to connect the different parts for **commerce** and for **managing or ruling** such a vast area. **We want this series to be a path for you into not simply the book of Romans, but a path into the full life of a disciple**. We know that you will be on our road system **traveling some this summer**, therefore, this is portable. You can follow online and continue to walk the way. Many of the road names began with **"Via" which means way**. These roads were what the **first Christ followers used to bring the gospel** to all parts of the world in a very short time, causing this **pagan, violently antagonist, culture to be transformed**. The Roman Road this summer can do the same for you.

**It is the road, or way for you to experience full life as a disciple of Jesus and, at the same time, the way to help others to hear.** **As a gift**, we want you to have one of these journals. If you will **look inside**, you will see that on one page we have the verses of the book of Romans and on the next page there is a blank lined page for taking notes and reflecting on what you are seeing. It is a bible that is intended for you to **write on**. We want anyone who will use one to take it and **bring it each Sunday**.

Here's a quick video to help us dive into this amazing part of scripture. [The Bible Project video...\(stop at 2:23\)](#)

This morning we will **start by looking at chapter one** of this letter. As we begin reading, it will be apparent that this is, in fact, a letter. As I begin reading, **you can start using your journal** by marking **what stands out** to you or any **patterns** you see. You can also **circle key words** or **write questions** that you have.

Paul, a **servant** of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, **set apart for the gospel of God**,<sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh<sup>4</sup> and was declared appointed to be the **Son of God in power** according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,<sup>5</sup> 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,<sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,<sup>7</sup> **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.  
Romans 1:1-7

**3-4 is hymn or creed shared across the churches.** It is Paul establishing himself with commonality. He is starting out by **establishing some common themes** and language that will allow him to **help this divided church** get on the same page.

Let's slide down to verses **16-17** which is **the heart** or theme of this first section of Romans. <sup>16</sup> **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.** <sup>17</sup> **For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."** Romans 1:16-17

This morning our title is "**Church Words**". You are going to see some words that get **thrown around a lot** in a church. Sometimes when a word is **used a lot without clarifying** what it really means, that word begins to lose its meaning. These words are from the **Greek language** that Paul wrote in and have been translated into the **English equivalent**. If we don't talk about what they mean, then they **become filler** like, "you know" or **blah, blah, blah**. And **because they are used so much** in scripture, then we will have a difficult time knowing what God is saying to us. **You can't apply** what you don't understand. **You can't align your life to something that seems fuzzy.**

**God's power is focused in the Gospel...Gospel is our first church word.** The gospel is just **the story of Jesus**, isn't it? Remember, those two verses at the beginning were an **ancient hymn or creed** that carried with it some of

what the gospel is. **They knew what the gospel was**, the center of what God has been, is and will continue doing in the world.

**An announcement of Good News**...like a good report from the battlefield during war.

**Paul wants to make sure they are clear, that the gospel is power to save anyone**, that means the gentiles who were excluded are now included. This is important for a church that is divided between **Jewish and gentile** Christ followers.

**The church in America is very much divided today.** That makes understanding the gospel as the center of everything very important. **If we don't have clarity about the gospel, how can we experience the power of God that comes from it?**

**"A mist in the pulpit creates a fog in the pew."** If we aren't clear at what the gospel is and isn't, **then the power of God is no longer focused from one point.**

If you have been in the **Come and See Class**, this may sound familiar. If you have not taken this class it will be offered at both Midland and Beaverton in the fall. **It's vital to understanding** what Eagle Ridge Church of God is about and gospel clarity is a big part of it. There is a preaching series in our archives called **The Discipleship Gospel** that might be helpful for you.

These two passages are vital to understanding the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. **First, the words of Jesus introducing His Gospel.** <sup>14</sup> **Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,** <sup>15</sup> **and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."** <sup>16</sup> **Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.** <sup>17</sup> **And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men."** <sup>18</sup> **And immediately they left their nets and followed him. Mark 1:14-18**

Paul, in an **earlier letter to the Corinthian church**, writes this: <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures**, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was **raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures**, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

(Diagram) Within these two verses are where we get clarity on the gospel in all its fullness and power. Not emphasizing the parts that are more convenient, but the whole thing.

**We split these seven elements into two categories.** These first are declaratives, or the facts that must be declared.

**Declarative:**

- Kingdom
- Christ
- Death
- Resurrection

**Which of these do we in the American church tend to ignore?** I would say it is the Kingdom of God.

**What if we stop there?** We have a list of ideas that we can say, “**sure I believe that all of that is true.**” And then go on and live my life however I want. **I can make it my story, starring me,** including Jesus because of what I believe.

That brings us to what we call **imperatives**. These are **the only reasonable responses if those four things are true.**

**Imperative:**

- Follow
- Repent
- Believe

**This word has been totally stripped of its real powerful meaning in our knowledge-based culture.** Jesus, Mark, or Paul would absolutely lose their minds if you took this word, **pistis**, and described it as intellectual agreement that an idea is true. The word **pistis** is deeper; **it is to believe**

so strongly that you put your trust in it. It is often translated as trust or faith.

If you notice these are in a circle. That is to demonstrate that they can come in any order. We tend to think repent comes first and, in many cases, it does. But it doesn't always work that way.

Let's look quickly at some of these elements Paul affirms in this first chapter. We believe that these seven elements were a part of what was passed down orally years before Mark and Paul wrote them down.

Can you spot any of these parts of the gospel? Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup> 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. Romans 1:1-7

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

Five of the seven elements are in this small section...Son of God...King v. 4, Death v. 4  
Resurrection v. 4, Obedience of faith, follow v. 5, Believe v. 16.

I would argue that "promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures" is a veiled reference to the kingdom of God, which Jesus came to announce.

These can't simply be church words, they are words that describe our reality. Here's the next church word in this next phrase and it connects

with the first. God's power is focused in the Gospel...**Only by Faith & obedience.**

**We can't experience the power of this good news if we don't put our faith in it. And the only way to demonstrate that we have put our faith in it is to obey Jesus.**

**"...faith, if genuine, always has obedience as its outcome; obedience, if it is to please God, must always be accompanied by faith." 38 Faith and obedience are the **opposite sides of the same coin.****

**Do you want to experience or unleash the power of God in your life?**

That power comes from the gospel. The Holy Spirit is the fire hose that brings this living water to us. **But my part or your part is to put our trust in Jesus to the point that it becomes faith. Faith comes before sight. This trusting faith drives us to step out first before we see what is going to happen.**

God's power is focused in the Gospel...Only by Faith & obedience...**God's righteousness is revealed.**

**This brings us to our next church word, righteousness. The only time we hear this word in our modern world is with the prefix "self". The idea of righteousness being anything but a negative is unheard of. But somehow, we can see that God is righteous through the gospel.**

But what does it really mean, God's righteousness?

- 1. He always does what is just and right.**
- 2. He is faithful to his promises.**

**In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness **deliver me!** <sup>2</sup> Incline your ear to me; **rescue me** speedily! Be a rock of **refuge** for me, a **strong fortress to save me!** Psalm 31:1-2**

**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." Isaiah 46:13**

**God being righteous means that he will rescue us from sin, death, our enemies and ourselves.**

**A shortsighted view may seem to describe God as neither just, right, nor faithful. But that is short sighted. This world is broken and, because of that, we have pain and suffering, but that is not the final word.**

**Do you want him to be the God who wins some battles for you, making life easier, or would you rather he be a righteous God who in the end, when it really counts, is righteous?**

**In the next section of Romans 1 I'm only going to pull out a few verses and phrases that will lead us to the next "church word." This section of chapter one is perfect for practicing a Bible study technique that is called inductive Bible study.**

**Here's what I want to challenge you to do with Romans 1:18-32. I want you to read through it once looking for all of the things that describe God and what he does. Mark those with a color or symbol in your journal. Then go through and mark all of the things that describe people and what they do. Then step three is to make two lists on the journal part. See if this helps reveal something to you.**

**You can even do it as I'm reading these phrases. Let me warn you, these are not easy to hear. But after looking at God's righteousness, his just, right and faithful nature, we must look at how that connects with unrighteous people like, well, us.**

**<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**

**<sup>21</sup> 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.**

**<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images**

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

God's power is focused in the **Gospel**...Only by **Faith** and obedience...God's **righteousness** is revealed...**God's wrath is earned**.

Our final church word is "wrath." And it seems that we've earned this.

**What people do...**

- Suppress the truth.
- Did not honor or give thanks to God.
- Thinking became futile.
- Hearts became foolish and dark.
- Exchanged glory of God for images.

**What God does...**

- God's righteous response is to let them have what they want.
- Gave them up to dishonorable passions.
- Gave them up to debased mind to do what is wrong.

**God's anger is not to be compared to human emotion that can be unpredictable and capricious, nor is it ever about His ego being offended.**

**Some of you had a parent who was both angry and unpredictable** so you walked through your early years on eggshells hoping to avoid an explosion. God's wrath is nothing like that.

**What about that phrase, "Gave them over to..."?**

"He (God) ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current of the river." But the language suggests a more active involvement of God. He does



not simply let go of the boat; rather, he confirms its disastrous course downstream. 61

Here's one of the most quoted of Paul's words to the Roman church. <sup>22</sup> **We are made right** (right or righteous) **with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.** <sup>23</sup> **For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.** <sup>24</sup> **Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. Romans 3:23**

**We are on a level playing field because God is just and fair. We are made righteous by grace through faith.**

**"Turning away from true knowledge of God means cutting ourselves off from any ultimately accurate understanding of this world and our place within it. 62**

**I believe that God has something special for us in the coming year. But this summer might just be the time when we demonstrate that we are ready for what God wants to do. I can tell you this much. With the gospel, and faith, and a righteous God we will be on the offensive, not playing defense. We can be the kind of church that finds unity in a divisive time and who can become what the gates of hell cannot stop.**

**Here's the best way to walk this road together over these summer months. [Walking the Roman Road](#)**

**1. [Take a quick walk](#) by reading straight through Romans.**

**2. [Watch The Bible Project videos](#) (link).**

**Watch it straight through and as we enter into each new section re-watch that part.**

**3. [Take a slow stroll](#) as we teach chapter by chapter.**

**There are some sermons that will cover multiple chapters nearer the end of the book.**

4. Use your Romans Journal to capture what God shows you along the way.

Try using different colored pencils or symbols to mark different things that you are looking for in each week's chapter. Then use the journal section to **write questions you have** and capture what God is saying to you through His Word.