

In step with Jesus 160

July 13, 2025

Key Text: 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. (Romans 1: 16-17)

Introduction

Last week we finished reading the book of Acts and today we will start reading the book of Romans. In the bible, the book of Romans follows immediately after Acts of the Apostles and the last chapters of Acts focused on Paul’s journey to Rome and his eventual arrival to Rome. However, Romans is not necessarily a continuation of the story recorded in Acts of the Apostles. As we will discover in today’s reading, Paul heard about the faith of the believers in Rome and wrote the letter to the Church in Rome even before his arrest in Jerusalem and journey to Rome. The bible did not tell who the first missionary to the Romans was, but we know that after the death of Stephen and a severe persecution arose against the believers in Jerusalem, they all scattered abroad and those who scattered preached the gospel wherever they went (Acts 8:4). Paul had longed to go to Rome before His arrest, but the Spirit of God did permit him at that time, but he was inspired to write. However, while his journey to Rome was delayed, God was preparing the ground for him and his prior contact with the church in Rome explains the warm reception he received from the believers when he finally arrived the city. When we give our lives fully to God, he works in us in such a way that everything we do fits perfectly into His plan of salvation and the blessing of our lives and the lives of others. Such was the experience of Paul.

Let us read the introductory part of Paul’s letter to the Romans and see what the Holy Spirit will teach us as we continue to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1: 1 – 17

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be 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 descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ 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, ⁵ 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, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ 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.

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 do not want you to be unaware, 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

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."

Reflections

In the first few verses of Romans chapter one, Paul introduced himself to the believers in Rome, affirming that he was a servant of God and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He affirmed the faith of the believers in Rome and introduced the key concepts of his teachings about salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What Paul wrote to the believers in Rome, he writes to us as believers today. Let us pay closer attention to what Paul wrote about his calling as a preacher of the gospel and his emphasis on the role of grace and faith in the salvation of souls.

Paul introduced himself to the Romans as a servant of God, called and set apart for preaching the gospel or the good news. He emphasized that the gospel he was preaching was not a new gospel, but that which God has already spoken about in the scriptures through the prophets. It was the good news about Jesus Christ the son of God, who was born in the flesh as a seed of David but was declared as the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead. Paul also explained why Jesus is important to us. He pointed out that Jesus is the channel through whom we receive the Grace of God. Grace is the unmerited favor of God. It is grace that gives us the unction to be apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ. It is through grace that we receive the gift of faith that leads to obedience and obedience eventually brings peace. However, we cannot receive the grace of God unless we receive and believe the gospel. Hence, we are saved, not by struggling to do things to impress God but by receiving the gospel which impacts grace and adds faith to faith unto salvation. This is good news indeed and I pray that God will help us to believe it and grow in it until we become like Jesus Christ.