Romans chap. 1

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, 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 you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the

creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The gospel to the Romans that Martin Luther said was the purest gospel and most important letter in the NT. It is helpful in our studies to have some background information on the church at Rome in the 1st century so we can relate to Paul and his audience. Nobody is certain who founded the church at Rome but most scholars believe the earliest Roman Christians were Jews who were exposed to Christianity while visiting Jerusalem. Christians in the ancient world did not meet together in large congregations but in house churches like the one mentioned in chap. 16 led by Priscilla and Aquila. Christians and Jews experienced intense persecution for their monotheistic beliefs and in 49AD the Roman emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from the city. This exodus allowed the church to grow and expand into a largely Gentile community. When Claudius died and the Jews were allowed back in Rome, the returning Jewish Christians came home to find a church that was much different from the one they had left. This resulted in disagreements over the OT law, including rituals such as circumcision and sabbath days and food restrictions. For these reasons, much of Paul's letter to the Romans includes instructions for Jewish and Gentile Christians on how to live in harmony and properly worship God in the spirit and put no confidence in the flesh.[1]

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. The great apostle here declares that his calling was not of man but of God himself. His conversion on the Damascus road was so powerful that he received a new name and is the only place in the bible where Jesus himself uses the word grace - And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness 2Cor. 2:9. Grace is not only for the

church but for all men, Jew and Gentile alike. Jesus is next said to be made of the seed of David but declared to be the Son of God indicating that his humanity had a beginning in this world but his Divinity is begotten not made. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name. The church has received grace and is sustained by grace and grows to maturity by grace. Grace or the unmerited favor of God is everything to the church. Many turn up their nose to the poor who are on welfare with their sense of entitlement but as sinners we are in the same boat. We have nothing to offer God except our great need of his love, mercy and forgiveness.

Paul next describes his longing for his brethren in Christ at Rome. How their faith is spoken of throughout the whole world and how without fail he makes mention of them in his prayers. He details the journey he was often willing to make but was hindered for this reason or that. He singles out the Gentile Christians not because they were better than the Jews but because he was the apostle to the Gentiles and had a burden for their Salvation that was placed on him by Jesus himself. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Grace, faith and love are the 'big three' of the NT so they will be a special focus in our studies and here we are given faith as the quality that the Christian lives by. Many in our day make faith into a choice or being predestinated or some other work of the flesh but this is false. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God Rom. 10:17. When we hear something we either believe it or we don't, there is no effort involved. Faith is trust and assurance that God can perform everything he has promised.

The final paragraph is a litany of sins most notably the sin of homosexuality. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: The verse here speaks of God giving up on those who have spurned him and hardened their hearts. God loves us with an everlasting love but men do pass a line in the sand or a point of no return where he gives us up to our own perverse nature. The sin of homosexuality is so grievous because it is a sign of a reprobate or someone who has been cast off by God. In our day heterosexual sex is almost seen as being abnormal in a world filled with every kind of sexual deviance. The other great sin of the homosexual movement is the adoption of the rainbow as a symbol of their perversion. The rainbow appears over the throne of the Father and is made up of seven colors that blend together into the spotless white of the righteousness of Christ or the love of God. The rainbow as a symbol of God's love has been perverted into a symbol of gay love by the homosexual movement which is a form of blasphemy. One of the most egregious things I've witnessed in our day is when president

Obama lit up the white house and capital buildings with the rainbow colors. I thought people would lose their minds when that happened but very few even cared showing we have become the nation of Sodom and the people of Gomorrah.

[1] historical info from the early church at Rome by Sam O'Neal