



KEY THOUGHTS

- As we begin this series in Romans, here are some things we'll see from this book:
- 1. This book is a thinker's book. The brilliant usage of logic flows from each chapter.
- 2. This book answers deep questions. What is the nature of man? What is the nature of God? And big worldview questions.
- 3. This book is beneficial for those who follow Jesus. The "therefore chapters" of 12-15 are natural responses to all God has done for us.
- 4. This book is beneficial for those who are skeptical. Paul raises the very objections and responses to the gospel that skeptics do.
- Why Paul wrote this letter:
 - 1. To explain the foundations of the gospel.
 - 2. To battle against Jewish/Greek tensions and animosity.
- Historical context and what was going on in Rome:
 - There was a clear Jewish presence in Rome long before there was a Christian one. In 59 B.C., Cicero wrote in describing the Jews, "You know what a big crowd it is, how they stick together, how influential they are..." Jews were numerous, persuasive, and they defended their own culture.
 - While we don't know exactly when, a Christian group also grew there. At the end of this letter, in Romans 16:7, Paul asks, "Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." There were Christians in Rome who had followed Jesus longer than Paul had!
 - But in 49 B.C., the Caesar Claudius expelled Jews from Rome, likely because of threats they were posing to Roman life there. Seutonius, a Roman historian at the end of the first century, gives this insight into why the expulsion happened: "Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because in their resentment against Christ they were continually creating disturbances."
 - Jews and Christians were at odds with each other, and this overflowed into church life, as many of the Christians were Jewish Christians.
 - In 54 B.C, right before Paul wrote this letter, Claudius died and the expulsion was lifted. Jews, including Jewish Christians, returned to Rome. The tensions remained.

- Part of what Paul did was to write this letter to address the disunity and rally the church to stay together.
- The layout of Romans:
 - 1. Romans 1-11 – The Power of the Gospel (here's what God has done)
 - a. Summary verse, Romans 1:16 – For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to those who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - 2. Romans 12-16 – The Therefore of the Gospel
 - a. Summary verse, Romans 12:1 – I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
- A brief walk-through of Romans 1:16:
- For I am not ashamed of the gospel...
 - Shame and embarrassment are directed always at people we deem as "below us" or people we'd like to "keep hidden"
 - It's stunning we would ever feel this way about God, and yet Paul acknowledges it's a distinct possibility
 - 1 Cor. 1:21 – God's message is foolishness to many, and Paul was owning that. He recognized that what we will look at in this series is a stretch and sometimes hard to believe
- ...for it is the power of God...
 - "Power" in Greek life was an impersonal force in life
 - Likewise, this view of a power-force was what the Philistines thought of power when they took the Ark of the Covenant and assumed that having it would bring them success and wealth
 - But the power Paul talked about was personal, attached to God
- ...for salvation...
 - Of all the ways God demonstrates His power, there is none more miraculous than the salvation of a person's soul! If you could ask God for only one thing, what would it be?
- ...to everyone who believes...
 - God's power is not available to all, but only to those who believe.
 - That "belief" will be addressed throughout Romans.
 - We don't believe IN, we believe INTO.

SCRIPTURES

- Romans 1:16
- 1 Corinthians 1:21

PRACTICAL AND REFLECTION

- Some challenges over this series:
 - 1. Make a commitment to stay engaged over the summer. Be here. Connect with us online when you can't be here in person.
 - 2. Read ahead. Take a look at what we've been covering, and read ahead a little.
 - 3. Pick up a journal next week, and through your own reading, and during our messages, explore these three questions:
 - a. About what am I curious?
 - b. With what am I encouraged?
 - c. By what am I challenged?