

## Romans 1:5-13    The grace of God

### Paul's longing to visit Rome

Romans is the first of Paul's letters, after Acts, probably because it is the longest, and the fullest explanation of the gospel. It has fittingly been called, "The Gospel According to Paul."

**1:1-4** introduces Jesus in His humanity and deity. Jesus was, *despised and rejected of men* (He was crucified); *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief* (Jesus wept): *and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not* [Isa 53:3 ]. He identifies with our humanity and we identify with Him. But this same Jesus by His resurrection from the dead is the Man of Glory [Hebrews 1:3] seated at the Right Hand of the Father. Paul begins Romans with his eyes firmly fixed on the Man of Glory, and so should we [see Col 3:1-2].

#### **1:5-7**

**Rom 1:5** *Through him and for his name's sake we have received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles [nations] to the obedience that comes from faith.*

"we have received grace" – through him, because He is the mediator of the New Covenant [Hebrews 9:15]. It is by grace we are saved,

**Eph 2:8** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

It is this *saving grace* Paul says that he, and we, have received. Receiving it is not automatic: it has to be received like a present at Christmas, gratefully. This grace leads us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Have you received the salvation that comes by God's grace through faith?

But grace isn't an easy believism, and it isn't cheap grace. It is totally free, and can never be earned; yet it will cost you everything because saving grace makes us obedient to Jesus: *the obedience that comes from faith.*

Saving grace enables us to believe, **and** moves us to obey Him because we love Him. It brings us to the place where we give up, because to live the Christian life without God's grace is impossible! But when we surrender our lives to Him who surrendered his life for us, we are saved and enabled to follow Him.

Paul says, *we received grace and apostleship*. Paul had a specific calling as an apostle [Rom 11:13]. Yet apostle simply means, 'sent one'. Every believer is a sent one. We are sent to make our lives count for God. Is your life counting for God, as a Christian mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, son, daughter, husband or wife? Is your life counting for God in the workplace as you seek to put into practice Christian principles of integrity, honesty and faithfulness?

Because ...

**Rom 1:6** *And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.*

**Rom 1:7** *To all in Rome, who are loved by God and called to be saints.*

Saints aren't remarkable individuals who have been exalted; biblically they are ordinary Christians who exalt Jesus. We do not pray to saints (which is forbidden); saints obey Jesus.

There are two kinds of people: saints and aints. Aints need to become saints, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **1:8-13**

Paul is writing to the saints in Rome even though he had never met them. Although the very early church in Rome was mainly Jewish, by the time of Paul's writing it was majority Gentile, with up to 60% slaves [1Cor 1:27]. The exceptional faith of these underclass Christians had become known all over the Roman Empire,

**Rom 1:8** *First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.*

Paul probably heard about the Roman Christians from his friends Aquila and Pricilla, Jewish Christians from Rome.

Paul had concluded his missionary journeys around the Aegean,

**Rom 15:19** *So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.*

Forever the pioneer, Paul wanted to take the gospel further, to Spain, and he saw this as an opportunity to fulfil his long held ambition to visit the church in Rome [Romans 15:20-24]. They were so close to his heart that he prayed for them regularly,

**Rom 1:9-10** *God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.*

It's one thing to pray for those you know and love, but quite another to pray with the same intensity for those you have never met. Such was the prayer life of the Apostle Paul. He gives 4 reasons why he wants to visit Rome:

1. **Rom 1:11** *I long to see you*
2. **Rom 1:11** *that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong*
3. **Rom 1:12** *that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.*
4. **Rom 1:13** *that I might have a harvest among you*

Yet Paul didn't reach Rome for another 3 years, and when he did travel it was under a Roman guard! And we are uncertain if he ever made it to Spain.

**Pro 19:21** *Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.*

Even when our plans do not work out we must be assured that Jesus is still our resurrected Lord in heaven and has all things in His hands.