**The Book of Romans**

Prologue:

The Message: God’s Righteousness Revealed as

His Power to Save (1:1-17)

***The Uncomplicated Gospel Message:***

***Believe and Be Saved***

***Romans 1:16, 17***

***Why is the Gospel such very good news?***

**Romans 1:16–17 (ESV)** 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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

We’ve seen that these verses are the key to understanding this book, explaining the message that drives the mission as growing directly out of God’s righteousness. God can be both loving and just after all, forgiving sinners while still punishing sin, in Himself rather than in them. It’s a unique message, since the religions of the world are all about what humans are supposed to do to gain salvation. Here, in the gospel, God has provided it, a gift for the receiving.

 Let’s take a closer look, and discover why that is such good news. . .

***The gospel is no reason for shame!***

 But why should it be? For one thing, it humbles us, for it shows we need a savior, and cannot save ourselves. (We like to do for our-selves, be our own person, stand on our own, *etc.*) Also, Rome was the capital of the known world, and would intimidate any out-of-towner with different ideas. But because God’s ways are far beyond ours, we can rest in His wisdom and His methods. See how God’s grace is contrasted with human “wisdom” in Isaiah 55 and 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

***The gospel fulfills God’s loving intention to save us.***

 Since the free gift of saving grace in Jesus is God’s idea and offer, we can be certain that He loves us, and His righteousness assures us that He can and does keep His word to save us. Hebrews 6:13-20

***The gospel is offered to everyone without exception.***

 Jews heard first, since God’s revelation has come through them (John 4:22), but that is only historically, and even the first promises to Abraham included hope for all nations. The one true God is not a tribal or national deity, but the Creator / Redeemer of all. Genesis 12:1-3

***The gospel is easy to understand and uncomplicated to receive, requiring faith alone.***

 God does not put salvation outside the reach of anyone. If it were technical, only the skilled could be saved. If it were complicated, only the brilliant could be saved. If it were physical, only the strong could be saved. If it were a long process, only adults could be saved. If it were expensive, only the rich could be saved. If it were abstract, only the philosophers could be saved.

 But it is a gift for the taking for all who believe what God says about His Son. Upon hearing this word, anyone who embraces it is saved, in that instant, given God’s life and Spirit, and forgiven all sins, past, present, and future. The gospel humbles our pride and exalts God’s grace. We can add nothing to God, but we can glorify Him by believing His testimony of His Son. Deut. 30:11-14; 1 John 5:9-12

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✔ What about good works? No good works will save us, nor cancel our sins. Good works will follow with salvation, for they, too, come from faith. But they do not earn us anything, nor coax God to love us more. Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5, 6

✔ Won’t you share this good news? Paul’s passion is contagious, once we grasp the gospel’s implications. God goes before us, drawing many to Himself when we tell them of His love. Far from being ashamed, we boast in God’s grace.