

Sent: Wednesday, October 04, 2017 8:11 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Session on Overview of Romans!

"Shepherd's Notes" notes that, "from a Christian viewpoint, many would classify Paul's letter to the church of Rome as the greatest letter of all time"! It also notes that the overarching theme is the "glorious truth" that "righteousness comes from God"! God "justifies guilty, condemned sinners by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone"!

Romans 1:16-17 constitute the "pivotal verses in the New Testament" (again according to Shepherds Notes) --by "stating concisely and with unusual clarity a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith," i.e., that the Gospel is the "saving power of God"!

The Apostle Paul, in 1:16-17, declares: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek! For in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written the righteousness man shall live by faith!"

This was the great "liberating message of grace" that Martin Luther finally discovered in Romans! Erwin Lutzer, in his book on "Rescuing the Gospel--The Story and Significance of the Reformation," writes that Martin Luther came to understand that the "righteousness of God" not only refers to the attribute of God--which results in His wrath and judgment for sin (the "bad news" with which he lived for so long!) --but also as a gift from God for sinners (the "good news" which he came to embrace)! This understanding is affirmed and reinforced by other Scripture, including those that follow!

Paul addresses this specifically in Romans 3:21-26: "But now apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith! This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say of His righteousness in the present time, so that He would be Just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus!"

Even more concisely in II Corinthians 5:21: "He (God) has made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (Jesus)!"

And Paul--the old Pharisee himself--writes in Philippians 3:9: "That I may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith!"

And Paul adds in Romans 5:1--"Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

What a "sense of liberation and joy" Luther came to feel when he first understood the "righteousness of God" in these terms! And so, should we!

And so, as we study the book of Romans, we too will be able to see the significance of, and connection between, such words and terms as "the good news of the Gospel," and "salvation" and "forgiveness of sin," and "justification by faith," and "redemption," and "propitiation" and "imputation"--and "grace and mercy," and "reconciliation," and "sanctification"! And more!

And we'll get more understanding of what Douglas Moo refers to as "salvation history"! And see the continuity and consistency between the Old and New Testament! And about whether there's more ahead for Israel in God's eternal plan! And about "living in the world"--and "ministering together"! And more!

Aren't you excited as I am as we get into the detail of this wonderful book? Our memory verse for next week's lesson is none other than Romans 1:16: "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!" And now that we better understand its context, we really need to add verse 17: "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteousness man shall live by faith!"

Have a great week, "men of the Bible" (and fellow "MOBsters")!

Lowell