

## **Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 3, Romans 1:2-17**

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 3, Romans 1:2-17.

In the previous session, we surveyed the book of Romans or at least one theme that runs through the book of Romans.

And we also looked at Romans 1:1. Now we're going to move forward and look at some more of chapter one. Paul has been set apart for the gospel, for the good news about Jesus. And this is the good news that was promised in advance.

Well, no wonder he can, we know he depends on Isaiah 52:7, as we mentioned before, the good news of salvation, the good news of peace, and the good news that God reigns, i.e. the good news of the kingdom. So, this good news was promised in advance. It goes back to the message of the prophets.

It's already in the Old Testament, Paul says, although in chapter 16 verses 25 to 26, which I do take to be part of the original text of Romans, already in chapter 16, Paul says it was already in the Old Testament, but it was a mystery there. It was there, but people didn't see it, or people at least didn't see it at this kind of level. So, Paul says that this was already there and it was given through the prophets.

The language of through, of mediation through the prophets indicates inspiration that God inspired the prophets. God was speaking through the prophets. He speaks of the Holy Scriptures.

Well, that's a theme in Romans. Paul is going to quote the scriptures a lot throughout his letter to the Romans. So, all this is already there.

He's going to expound it from the Old Testament. It was there, but it needed to be understood. And that's something Paul is going to help them to understand it better.

Now he's going to give the subject of his gospel in chapter one, verses three and four. The subject of the gospel is his son. And he's going to speak of him in two ways.

According to the flesh, he's a descendant of David. According to the spirit, he's the son of God. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that part of Jesus was human and part of Jesus was divine? That's really not what we mean when we speak of the incarnation, but rather two different ways of looking at it.

According to the flesh, ethnically, Jesus was descended from David. But by the spirit, he was declared to be God's son, Paul says, by the resurrection from the dead. Already in the way that you have some Old Testament texts about the Messiah as God's son, explained in the New Testament, Acts 2, verse seven, and some other texts.

In Acts chapter 13, did I say, that Psalm 2, verse seven, as explained in Acts 13, as explained in Hebrews 1, said that Jesus was openly shown to be God's son by God the Father at his exaltation, at his enthronement, when he was raised from the dead and enthroned at the Father's right hand. Now, that doesn't mean that it's inappropriate to call him God's son before that. Luke does this in Luke chapter one, for example.

But Jesus is exalted as God's son. He's publicly declared to be God's son, which is the issue here, with power at his resurrection. Well, with power often goes with resurrection.

There was a regularly prayed Jewish prayer. It's one of the 18 benedictions, the Shemona Esrei, that speaks of God revealing his power by the resurrection. And Paul says this was done by the spirit of holiness.

Well, that's linked with power. The spirit of God is linked with power later on in Romans 15.13, 15.19, also in 1 Corinthians 2.4, and 1 Thessalonians 1.5. And the spirit is linked with resurrection in Romans 8.11. So, none of this is surprising. But the spirit of holiness was another way of describing the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit.

Now, the phrase Holy Spirit is used only twice in the Old Testament, Isaiah 63 and Psalm 51. But it was used very, very commonly in early Judaism as a way of describing the spirit of God, which is also what that meant in the Old Testament. Romans 1:5-6 circles around back to Paul's calling.

Now, for those who are very familiar with very eloquent Greek, in what was called a period, you would start with something and then at length, you would circle around back to it. This is not technically a period in Greek, but Paul is speaking in a way that people would appreciate that this was very carefully designed a carefully designed introduction. Paul actually could have just given his name and then said, you know, to the believers in Rome.

But he's, again, describing himself at some length before he goes on to that part. He says we. Does he mean himself and the Roman believers? We have received apostleship, the grace of apostleship, in a broader sense, he's identifying with them.

Or does he just mean himself? Sometimes you have an epistolary we. So that has been a matter of debate. But in verse six, he does speak of Gentiles among whom you are the called.

So, it could be simply an epistolary we. But he speaks of we probably meaning Paul, although there may be a sense in which they shared it, but probably meaning Paul. We have received the grace of apostleship.

Well, elsewhere, later on in Romans 12, for example, Paul speaks of receiving gifts by grace. We are able to minister because God has graced us with that. Not only did he mean that we didn't deserve the favor of that, which it does mean, but also in a sense he empowered us with that.

He uses grace in a way that it's something God enabled us to do. So, God gave Paul the grace of apostleship. God is the one who empowered him with that.

God's the one who gets the credit for the work. And the mission that he's given in his apostleship is to bring about the obedience of faith for his name's sake among the Gentiles. Scholars have debated what this means.

Obedience that produces faith, obedience that is produced by faith, depends on how you take the Greek grammar, it can be any of these, or the obedience that is faith. While that's debated, that there is a relationship between obedience and faith is not really debated. We see it elsewhere in Romans.

We see it in the conclusion of Romans, which again, I do take to be authentically part of Romans. That faith for Paul was not something where you just checked off a box and said, okay, I believe that. And therefore, technically I get to go to heaven.

And I'll think about this when I'm about to die. That's not what Paul meant by faith. He didn't mean being a nominal Christian.

He meant that we believe in Jesus. We stake our lives on the truth of his claim. That's why we hand our lives over to him.

What does he save us from? He doesn't just save us from the penalty for sin. He saves us from sin. He gives us a new life.

Now, that doesn't mean that we act perfectly after that. If we did, Paul wouldn't have had to explain to them why they were dead to sin and therefore should live accordingly. But it does mean that we are able to overcome sin.

Not that we always do, but that sin no longer has dominion over us. We've become new people in Christ. And as we learn more from God and as we believe more about

what he's done in our lives, more and more we can be conformed to the image of Christ.

Or to put it a different way, sometimes you've had people get the cart before the horse. In the case of Romans, Paul is pretty clear. You don't work your way to salvation.

You don't earn salvation. Good works are to be the result of what God does in us. They're to be the result of trusting Christ to save us from sin.

At the same time, it's not like there is no obedience that comes with it. It's not like there's no righteousness that comes with it. God is the one who gives us the gift of righteousness, but righteousness is part of the gift.

It's not something we do to earn the gift. It's part of the gift. And so, if we really have faith, it will be expressed in living a different way than the way that we lived when we didn't have faith in Christ.

He says that this is for his name's sake. I think his commentary actually sees this as a theme or the theme of Romans, that everything is for God's glory. I'm ashamed to say I didn't even see it until I read his commentary.

I might not say that's the main theme. I may be exaggerating what he said, but it is a major theme in Romans. God is interested in his honor, in his glory.

That's actually not exclusive from caring about us because it's good for us. I mean, what do we need most? We need the truth about God. And that brings God honor because God is perfect.

And so, the truth about him brings him honor. And bringing him honor also brings people to him. But the obedience of faith for his name's sake among the Gentiles, or it could be among the nations.

So probably in this context, among the Gentiles. So, Paul wanted to make sure that the gospel got out to the Gentiles among whom you are called. So, he's coming back to the idea of called, but also, we see that the majority of the church in Rome at this point consists of Gentiles.

Now that doesn't mean that there aren't any Jews there, which some people have argued there are virtually no Jews there. But in 54, again, Jewish Christians were able to come back. If you look at the names of people in Romans chapter 16, of course, some of those are leaders of house churches and maybe a disproportionate number of leaders were Jewish because they knew the Torah better.

But we do see that there were Jewish Christians in Rome, and Jewish believers in Jesus in Rome. So, it wasn't all Gentile, but it seems that the majority of the congregation was Gentile. And that's important to take into account as we move forward.

They seem to have known some Jewish customs, but those were widely known in Rome, including by Judaism's detractors in Rome. You find it in their writings. In Romans chapter one and verse seven, Paul speaks of being beloved.

He speaks of being loved by God. Well, that's something that he's going to come back to again and again. Chapter five, verse five, where God's love is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Chapter five and verse eight, how God demonstrated his love for us when Christ died for us. 835, 37, 39, at that climax at the end of Romans chapter eight, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Chapter nine, verses 13 and 25, where God says, Jacob, I loved, Esau I hated. 11:28, they're beloved for the ancestors' sake. Also love for God, chapter eight and verse 28, where all things work together for good for those who love God.

Love for others, Romans 12:9, 13:8-10, where the heart of the law is loving one another. Chapter 14, verse 15, where he's dealing with loving one another despite your different customs. Love is going to be a major emphasis in Romans and it's already introduced right here in the beginning.

Paul knows where he's headed with this. And he speaks of them as called saints. At least that's how it's often translated.

Paul is a called apostle. They are called saints. Now, what does it mean to be a saint? Of course, the Catholic church has a particular usage for that.

That's referring to people who were particularly holy and so on. But that's not the sense in which this is meant. This is referring to all believers here.

And saint is just the way it's often been translated. What saint, the term translated saint means, *hagios* is a term that means consecrated or set apart or holy. So, these are the holy ones.

These are the ones who've been consecrated to God. And if you compare First Corinthians, you can see that sometimes even people who are not living in a way that's consecrated to God, it doesn't mean that God hasn't consecrated them to himself. It just means they need to be what they are.

They need to live accordingly because he speaks to the Corinthians at the beginning, and calls them saints sanctified in Christ Jesus. We have been consecrated to God. And what does it mean to be consecrated to God? It means that we're set apart for him.

We don't belong to this world. We don't conform to this world, but are transformed by the renewing of your mind. If we think of ourselves as those who've been set apart for God, you know, if you had something in the temple that was set apart for holy use, it wasn't to be used for anything else.

We should be completely devoted to God. Everything we are, and everything we have should be devoted to God's service. That's what it means to be saints or consecrated ones set apart.

Now, again, first Corinthians shows us that in practice, people don't always live that way, but that's ideally what we are. And other texts, second Corinthians 6 and the first verse of seven, first Peter, and so on. Be holy, God says, as I am holy.

Well, to be holy as God is holy means we are completely set apart for God's purpose. That doesn't mean we can't joke around and be friendly to one another and enjoy our food and things like that. The Bible says that the food has been sanctified too.

But the point is that ultimately the purpose of our lives, is not just, that we're not autonomous anymore. We're not just thinking, okay, what will be nice for me in this little life that I live, but what will count eternally for the glory of the God to whom I belong? It gives us an eternal purpose.

Well, he greets them, grace and peace from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus. Well, you remember about different parts of letters. It's from the author.

Then it states the name of the audience and then it gives greetings. As we said earlier, Chirene was changed to Charis, and Paul added peace, a typical Jewish greeting. And it functions as a blessing.

May you have grace and peace. But such a blessing always invoked a deity or when it was peace, normally a Jewish greeting, it would invoke the deity, God. And Paul is going to do that here.

Grace and peace to you from God, the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. By the way, God and Lord in the Greek translation of the Old Testament are both divine titles. Lord isn't always, but often it is.

And we can see from 1 Corinthians 8, verses 5 and 6, that for Paul, it functions especially in that way. One God, one Lord of the Shema becomes God, the Father, and Jesus. The Shema being, he always wrote the Lord, our God, the Lord is one.

So, Paul is invoking Jesus as divine right here in the opening of many of his letters. And many others also did the same thing in 1 Peter and Revelation 1 and so on. Moving now to Romans 1, verses 8 through 15.

Paul is graced. He has received the grace of apostleship. He's graced for all Gentiles, but that very calling is what has detained him from visiting Rome because his mission has kept him busy elsewhere.

You know, there are already believers in Rome. So, he's trying to go where the gospel has not been preached. He elaborates this more fully in chapter 15.

Possibly he's been detained a bit by Claudius' decree when he was following the via Ignatia from Philippi to Thessalonica. Well, he could have kept following it across to the Western coast of the Balkans, gone across the Adriatic, and gone on to Rome. Probably he also didn't do that because he had some persecutors who were hot on his tail.

So, he went south to Berea and then eventually left Macedonia, and went into Achaia. But the main reason that he hasn't come to Rome yet is especially because of spiritually needier destinations, which may suggest something to us about parts of the world that haven't received the gospel yet. There are places where we definitely need to send people, where the harvest is falling to the ground and rotting for lack of labor.

But there are also places where people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel and may not have the opportunity unless, well, sometimes there are other ways to, if they, you know, through airwaves or whatever, to get the gospel in and we trust God is going to use that. We're praying, God will speak to people in visions and dreams and whatever. But there are some places that won't be reached without people who are willing to go there and never come back alive.

And that's the kind of person Paul was. And as people who are consecrated to Christ, that is the kind of person some of us will need to be. We don't all have the same calling.

John the Baptist and Jesus didn't have the same calling, Matthew 11, Luke 7. But there are places that need to be reached that have never been reached. There are billions of people who have never heard the gospel in ways that are intelligible to them within their cultural context. And of course, once we reach some people there

and they grow in the faith, they can reach their own culture better than we can reach it to begin with.

But so many people need to be reached. So, Paul did have an advantage in the Roman Empire because he spoke Greek. And in the Eastern Roman Empire, that gave him a lot of advantages because that was kind of a lingua franca in most places where he went.

Paul also offers a Thanksgiving. We have these in a lot of his letters. It's not in all ancient letters, but it appears in a number of ancient letters.

And Paul has them in most of his letters. It's kind of noteworthy where he doesn't, for instance, in Galatians, where he seems to be rather worked up and a bit perturbed by the behavior of the Galatian Christians to the extent that he, a couple of times in chapter one, calls down a curse on those who are leading them astray. But in any case, usually, he has a Thanksgiving in his letters.

In chapter one in verse nine, he calls God as his witness. Well, calling a deity to witness was common practice. It was basically an oath.

If you called a deity to witness, you were saying this deity who sees all these things knows whether I'm telling the truth or not. Therefore, I'm calling this deity to witness that I am telling the truth with the implication that if I'm not telling the truth, I'm dishonoring this deity's name. And this deity will punish me, perhaps kill me, something like that.

So, most people were scared to give false oaths, but some people were actually irreligious enough to do it. Actually, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, which is an ancient rhetorical handbook from the pre-Christian period, gives an explanation of different ways that you can lie under oath. But anyway, calling a deity to witness was a common practice.

Paul does that. And you think, well, but didn't Jesus say not to do that? You have the same thing in James 5:12. Jesus was saying, don't swear by this or by this or by this thinking you're getting away from swearing by God's name. Let your yes be yes, let your no be no.

In other words, you should have such integrity that you don't even need oaths. But he may not have literally been saying, you can never swear an oath. It may be expressing it in a hyperbolic way.

Of course, that like everything else is debated. But this is my explanation for why Paul will often do this, even though I don't think there's any question that Jesus actually taught that. It's also attested in James and so on.



But, Paul seems to even evoke the same wording of that in 2 Corinthians chapter one. He speaks of longing, of yearning to be with them. And that was a familiar expression in affectionate letters of friendship.

In fact, sometimes you have writers of these letters and we'll come to this kind of idea more in verse 11. But sometimes you have writers of friendly letters saying to their friends, you know, I'm really hurt because you didn't write me more frequently or I'm hurt because you didn't visit me when you were in the area or didn't make a point of coming and visiting me. And usually, not in the case of 2 Corinthians chapter one, which is stated a lot more forcefully, but usually it was just an affectionate way of saying, you know, I missed hearing from you.

I wish I could hear from you. Not to lay a guilt trip on the person, make them feel guilty for not writing, but to just say, you know, I love to hear from you. It was culturally understood convention to do that.

And Paul is like, you know, I yearned to be with you. I wanted to be with you. It's just my calling is kept to me somewhere else right now.

And he prays, verses 10 and 11, he prays that he may visit them because he really wants to impart some grace to them. You know, God has given him the grace of apostleship. He wants to impart some grace to them or a gift of grace to them, a charisma to them in God's will.

That was a common caveat. 1 Corinthians 4.19 and 16.7. You also have it in Acts chapter 18. Well, if God wills.

Greeks and Jews alike often said that. Of course, James tells us that we're supposed to say that because we don't know what the future holds. When he says in God's will, it may be also partly because he knows the dangers await him in Jerusalem.

He's not sure how the collection is going to be received. And also, he recognizes that there are many who are not obeying the gospel in Judea who may give him trouble. Romans 15.31 and 32.

He's also, in verses 11 and 12, Paul wants to give them a gift. He wants to impart to them some spiritual gift. He's not the founder, so he's writing unobtrusively as to siblings.

He's not making assumptions like, you know, I'm your father, like he says to the church in Corinth. He says, brothers and sisters, you know, I want to share something with you, something that I have. I want to give it to you so that we may be mutually encouraged.

Verse 12. So, he's writing, he's an apostle, but he's writing to his fellow called ones, his fellow set-apart ones, and he believes they will be mutually encouraged. They'll bless him.

He'll bless them. Some of the encouragement he may need may be being sent on his way to Spain, as he's hoping. But some are especially gifted for encouragement.

The same word *parakaleo* appears in 12.8 as a spiritual gift and Paul himself does it elsewhere in this letter. I beseech you. I encourage you.

Same wording, Romans 12:1, Romans 15:30, Romans 16:17. But what he especially wants to encourage is their faith, Romans 1:16 and 17. And, you know, that's what he's going to go on to do in this letter. I mean, that's going to be a central part, a central point of this letter.

Well, why does he want to encourage them? Again, verses 11 and 12. He's got a mission to the Gentiles, verse five and verses 13 through 15. And so, this mission to the Gentiles includes them, he said, and he has a divine obligation.

It's not just he'd like to, but he also has an obligation to do so, verse 14. He speaks of that, again, also in 1 Corinthians 9, verses 16 and 17. I have an obligation before God, and if I don't want to do it, well, then I have to do it.

So, I may as well want to do it and get to do it. But he has a divine obligation, verse 14, and the divine obligation is to reach the entire range of Gentiles, he says in verse 13 here. He uses the language of debt or obligation.

He'll come back to that in chapter 13, owe no one anything except to love one another. Language of debt was very significant in antiquity, especially the Jewish people weren't supposed to charge interest and loans, but they couldn't always even get their loans back because of the seventh year and the year of Jubilee. They'd have to forgive all debts.

It was a way of keeping people from becoming debt slaves, and getting into a permanent cycle of poverty. But it also meant that sometimes people wouldn't get their money back and not everybody could afford that. So people stopped lending when it was like the sixth year or close to the Jubilee year.

As a consequence, Jewish teachers worked out a way around it called the possible, where you could lend the money to the temple, the temple would lend the money to the people, the people had to pay back the temple and the people got their money back. It was a way to ensure that poor people at least were able to plant their crops and so on. Debt became a major issue.

And we see this in the Roman world where people could charge interest. There's one case reported. This is an exorbitant, extreme example, but I like to give extreme examples because they're more memorable.

They make the point graphically, but there was one person who lent money to an entire city at 50% interest. So, you can tell he would make a lot of money back unless they defaulted on their loan. But verses 13 and 14, the Gentiles.

The Gentiles included Greeks and barbarians. Barbarians was a term for non-Greeks. So Jewish people were considered by Greeks to be barbarians too, although they made exceptions for Romans, especially since they'd been conquered by them.

They didn't consider them barbarians. Those whom Greeks considered wise were Greeks and barbarians they typically, or traditionally at least, had considered foolish. They didn't speak the Greek language.

Their language sounded to Greeks like bar, bar, bar, bar, and that's why they called them barbarians. Greek was the dominant culture of the Eastern Mediterranean. It had become Greco-Asian culture to some extent.

After the Greeks conquered the Persian Empire, the cultural movement went in both directions. But Macedonians considered themselves Greek and the dominant culture in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially in the cities, considered itself Hellenistic or Greek. So Paul wants to reach all the Gentiles.

He wants to reach Jews. The gospel is for Jews and Gentiles, but he has a particular mission to Gentiles. And these Gentiles include both Greeks and non-Greeks.

The thesis statement of Romans 1, again, not all documents had this, but I agree with those who think that Romans does have one, a *propositio*, a thesis, or some people would say this is what Greeks call the hypothesis, hypothesis, dealing with a particular local situation. But this may be more general. So, it may be what Greeks call the thesis.

Thesis statements were common. You have here in 1:16 and 1:17, a number of themes that pervade Romans. God's righteousness.

That's a theme, especially up through chapter 10, a major theme. Faith. Well, that's a major theme in Romans, especially in chapters 1, 3 and 4, 10 and 14.

The Jewish Gentile issue, especially in chapters 9 through 11, and then again in 15. And as we've seen, that runs throughout the book of Romans as well. Some suggest

more generally that the theme here is the gospel because he's speaking of good news for both Jew and Gentile about righteousness and faith.

The themes reflect Old Testament language. For instance, Psalm 98 verses 2 and 3, Isaiah 51 verses 4 to 5, and 52:10 and so on. Fitting what we saw back in Romans 1.2, Paul is making known this gospel for which he's been set apart through the scriptures of the prophets.

So, he's using the language of the Old Testament and the themes of the Old Testament to explain this is the way God is. And therefore, that's why this good news has come about the way that it is. Richard Hayes has done a lot on intertextuality with the Old Testament and a number of other scholars have done this, looking at Old Testament themes here.

Although I'm going to interpret this a little bit differently than Richard, but with great respect for his work on intertextuality. The gospel, verse 16, this is the object of faith. The subject of the gospel is God's Son.

We already saw that back in verse 9. You can compare verses 1 through 4, especially 1:3, where it speaks of the gospel, the good news about Jesus who was born according to the flesh by the seed of David and according to the spirit of holiness with power. His resurrection was declared to be the Son of God. The subject of the gospel, we also see in 15, 19, and 20, and in 16, and 25, the subject of the gospel is Jesus Christ, Jesus the Messiah.

So, what is the gospel? What is evangelism? What does it mean to proclaim the evangel, evangelion? It means to tell people about Jesus and especially the climax of Jesus' ministry in his death and resurrection. That's the heart of the gospel. You can expand it beyond that, the whole gospel of the kingdom.

You can read all four gospels to them and you're giving them gospel, but at the very least, Jesus' death and resurrection. It's the climax of God's work throughout salvation history. Now, in verse 16, he also says, I'm unashamed of this gospel.

Unashamed may be what we call litotes, where you have a deliberate understatement to make the point. So, he's not ashamed of the gospel, meaning he's proud of the gospel or he boasts in its message. And we have that elsewhere where Paul says, you know, if I'm going to boast, I boast in the cross of Christ alone.

This was a culture that emphasized honor and shame. In fact, in all cultures, we do that somewhat, but this was a culture that heavily emphasized honor and shame, especially male, urban, ancient Mediterranean culture. Paul's message involved folly and weakness in a status-conscious culture, emphasized in 1 Corinthians 1:18-23, the message of the cross.

Oh yes, I have devoted my life to follow an executed criminal whom Rome condemned and hanged on a cross, the most despicable and humiliating of deaths for the lowest status of people. Yes, I am his follower. And I'm not ashamed.

The world's hostility could provide a temptation to be ashamed. 2 Timothy 1:8,-12-16 speak of this, being ashamed of chains, being ashamed of being a prisoner of Rome. 1 Peter 4:16, you know, let none of you suffer as an evildoer, but don't be ashamed if you suffer as a Christian.

Don't be ashamed if you suffer for the cause of Christ. There was the temptation to be ashamed. In fact, there were times when I was beaten as a young Christian for sharing the gospel because of the places where I was sharing the gospel, sometimes in the street, and a lot of people came to Christ and some people didn't like the message.

You know, I was just offering it to them. I wasn't imposing it on anybody, but they didn't like the message, maybe things they'd heard about it. Usually, the people who beat me were usually high on drugs or drunk.

But anyway, there were times afterward when I felt ashamed, but I shouldn't have. The Bible says that we're supposed to rejoice when we suffer for the name of Christ. I mean, one of the times I probably should have kept my mouth shut.

I wasn't doing what I was supposed to be doing. Maybe two of the times. But anyway, because one of the times I did fill a check from the Holy Spirit.

You don't need to witness to this person. Don't talk to this person. I just thought I should share Christ with everybody.

He beat me and told me he would kill me if he ever saw me again. But anyway, we should not be ashamed of the good news of Christ. And Paul later says that God's servants will not be put to shame eschatologically in the time of the final judgment.

Romans 5:5, talking about the hope that we have in Christ that the Holy Spirit gives us. Hope does not make us ashamed, evoking the language of the Psalms there. Chapter 9.33 and 10.11, he evokes the language of Isaiah 28.16, where again, we will not be put to shame if we have faith in Christ.

He says that the reason he's not ashamed is because this good news is God's power for salvation. It's what enables salvation. He uses the language of power elsewhere-- power to create, chapter 1:20; power, the way God acts in history, chapter 9:17-22; power from miracles in chapter 15:19; and especially back in chapter 1:4, power to raise the dead. He elaborates on that in Ephesians 1:19-20. Again, I do believe Paul

wrote Ephesians. But because of all this, it's also the power to transform by providing a new life, implied in Romans 15.13, transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 1:18, the cross is the power of God for salvation. The Spirit's power to convince people of salvation, that comes from the Holy Spirit too. 1 Corinthians 2.4-5. 1 Thessalonians 1.5. So God's power to bring about salvation.

It's power to raise the dead, power someday to raise our mortal bodies. It's also the power to transform us through the gospel and to save us in the present as well as in the future. Well, he says this is to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

He's already said in verse 5 and in verses 13 to 15 that his message is for all peoples. And now he's reiterating that point, which is going to appear again multiple times in Romans. He says, this is for all peoples, but it was rooted in the promises to Israel, Chapter 1.2. And this tension between Jew and Gentile is resolved at length as Paul elaborates on that in Romans 9-11.

It follows the model of Jesus, for instance, in Mark 7.27, where Jesus says to the Syrophenician woman from the Greek ruling citizen class of Syro-phoenicia, he says, I've come first for the children of Israel. Let them be fed first. But then he grants a request because of her faith.

Same with Paul in the book of Acts, Chapter 13, verse 5, starts in the synagogues. In chapter 28, verse 17, he gets to Rome. What does he do? He calls together the Jewish leaders of Rome to speak with them.

So, he wants to reach the Jewish leaders in Rome too. Acts 28 is after this letter, but he wants to reach the Jewish people. He's going to start with the Jewish people, to the Jew first and also the Greek, but he also wants to go to the Gentiles.

That's his main calling. And some people have questioned Luke's portrayal in the book of Acts, like in Acts 13.5 of Paul going first to the synagogues and afterward to the Gentiles. It's unfortunate that they would question that because in 2 Corinthians 11, Paul speaks of five times being beaten in the synagogues, being beaten with 39 lashes.

That was a synagogue beating. Deuteronomy says you're not to go beyond 40. So, it was a fence around the law.

They made it 39 max. And so, he had received that a number of times in the synagogues. If he weren't going to the synagogues, he wouldn't have been beaten in the synagogues.

He could have always repudiated his association with them. After all, he was a Roman citizen. He didn't have to submit to that, but then he'd lose his voice in the synagogues.

So multiple times he was beaten in the synagogues, Paul actually literally was going to the Jew first and also the Greek. In terms of strategy, that also made sense as well as in terms of salvation history, because here were the people who already knew the scriptures, both the Jews and the God-fearers who came regularly. They already knew the scriptures.

They already had a category for a Messiah, or at least many of them did. So that's where Paul starts, but his mission is to everybody. Why does he say Jew first and also the Greek here? Why does he say Greek instead of Gentiles? Maybe he's decided to leave out the barbarians now and just minister to the Greeks, you think? A couple of possible explanations here.

First of all, Gentiles, he already mentioned them as Greeks and barbarians in verse 14, but most Christians in Rome were Gentiles and most of those Christians in Rome were Greek-speaking. They were immigrants and most of the Jewish community in Rome, although some of them were Latin speaking, most of them were Greek-speaking as well. Romans often viewed themselves as Greeks and not barbarians.

Jewish people in Rome were mostly Greek-speaking. Early Christians there were mostly Greek-speaking. Inscriptions there show that, catacombs, and so on.

The leadership lists show that up until the second century. First Clement, written toward the end of the first century from the church in Rome to the church in Corinth, is written in Greek, which isn't surprising since the church in Corinth might still be largely Greek-speaking, but the church in Rome seems to be largely Greek-speaking as well. But another factor, is when he speaks of Jew and Greek, he often means just Jew and Gentile in general.

You have Jew and Greek in Romans 2:9 and 10, and 3:9, 10, 12. You also have it a lot of times in Paul's writings and even sometimes in Acts. In some other cases, you have Jew and Gentile, Romans 3:29, 9:24, 1 Corinthians 1:23, but often he uses Jews and Greeks.

Greek as a metonymy or Greek as something that stands for Gentiles as a whole. Josephus often uses the term Greeks for all non-Jewish urban residents. Now, some translations I think just translated Gentiles here, making my explanation superfluous, but in case you have a translation that is sticking closer to the original language, Greek here probably just stands for Gentiles in general.

And we know Paul cares about all Gentiles because of what he's already explicitly said earlier about Greeks and non-Greeks. Why the good news is for Greeks as well as for Jews? Well, he says that he uses the word *for, gar* in Greek. He's connecting it with what follows.

This is what's going to show that this is good news for Gentiles as well. If you actually diagram, you can make an outline of Romans 1 but if you actually try to diagram it, you have this long sentence and you have all these connectives in Greek. This is true because of this, this is true because of this, and so on.

You could diagram it like a flow chart, but this is good news for Greeks as well as for Jews because he says God's way of righteousness is through faith. So therefore, it's accessible to Gentiles. Also, he's going to develop that in chapter 1 in verse 17.

Well, that would help us a lot if we understood what these terms about which he's speaking signify. What does he mean by righteousness, especially the righteousness of God? What does he mean by faith? *Dikaiosune*, righteousness. In normal Greek usage, the term meant justice.

In the Septuagint, again, the kind of text that was the most common version of the text in Paul's day. In the Septuagint, often righteousness is related to God's faithfulness or to his covenant love. We see this all over the place in the Psalms, Psalm 36, Psalm 40, Psalm 88, Psalm 98, Psalm 103, Psalm 111, 119, 141, 143, 145.

And I'm giving you the English enumeration rather than the Greek enumeration in the Septuagint. God's righteousness causes him to act in the Septuagint. In Psalm 31.1 and 35.24, it causes him to act justly.

Well, that makes sense of the Greek term *Dikaiosune*, that that would be used that way. But it also causes him to act mercifully in favor of his servant. Psalm 5.8, Psalm 71.2 and 15 and 16 and 19 and 24, Psalm 88.12. And when forgiven in Psalm 51.14, the psalmist will praise God's righteousness.

So, God's righteousness is his justice, but it's also God's faithfulness to his covenant so that he puts his people right with him. We have shocking language in Romans, the shocking language of God justifying the wicked. Justifying doesn't mean illegal fiction.

You can pardon somebody, but to justify somebody means to acquit them, to pronounce them not guilty. And in the Septuagint *Dikaiosune*, the verb that is used to justify, it's not a legal fiction. It doesn't mean that God just pronounces you innocent, but you're not really.

Rather, it's recognizing that one is righteous. You find this in forensic settings like Genesis 44:16, Isaiah 43:9 and 26, Ezekiel 44:24. You have the requirement, Exodus



23:7, judges must not acquit the guilty. They must not justify or pronounce righteous those who are guilty.

They must justify, that is, pronounce righteous the innocent, Deuteronomy 25:1. We see that God punishes the guilty and justifies the righteous in 1 Kings 8:32 and 2 Chronicles 6:23. We see that God is justified, shown to be just in this case, by decreeing just judgment, Psalm 51:4, which is cited in Romans 3:4. Also, we see that it refers to rendering judgment, favoring one by mercy. We have an example of this in Daniel. There's a judgment against Israel in Daniel 9:7 and 14, but Daniel pleads, forgive them according to your righteousness, Daniel 9:16. In Micah chapter 7, God will punish the guilty and yet finally justify them, Micah 7:9. I don't know if that's what I said, but eschatological vindication, future justification, future acquittal, being shown to be right before God's judgment.

It's used that way, in Isaiah 45:25, 50:8, and 58:8. Even though some of these are promises to Israel who are being punished in the previous context, including through the righteous servant who would bear their sins, Isaiah 53:11, which seems to be evoked in Romans 4:25. God being righteous in Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 8 meant that he would honor the promise to Abraham, whom he found faithful, alluding back to Abraham believing God and it is counted to him as righteous. So, I'm doing this a great length, but it's very important to understand what this means because it's going to set the tone for what we see about righteousness and justification throughout the book. God's righteousness puts his people right with him.

It's incompatible with dependence on mere human righteousness. You have that in Romans 9:30 through 10:6 and in Philippians 3:9. It's not a goal reached by human effort, but it's a relational premise that should dictate the new life of faithfulness to Christ, Philippians 3:9 through 11. Often the book of Romans uses the verb cognate, *dikaioo*, for God putting believers right with himself.

And that may thus be how Paul is using the noun cognate, *dikaiaune*, here. God who puts his people right with himself. He's just, but we're going to see in chapter three how he can be both just and the justifier of those who are in Christ Jesus.

He makes us right with himself and therefore he can be just to pronounce us right. But it's not just forensic. That's only one element of the term's normal sense.

After dealing with our acquittal in a forensic sense, the letter addresses conduct. Romans chapter six, some in chapter eight, Romans 12:1 through 15:7. When God pronounces something done, one expects this to happen, not merely produce a legal fiction. When God says, let there be light, light is.

Genesis 1:3 and 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul applies that to our experience of God as well. Righteousness is not a legal fiction. Righteousness is a transforming gift.

It's a divine gift rather than human achievement. Paul's clear on that. Romans 5:17 and 21.

But God's gift also enables us to live in a new way. That's why he speaks of obedience. Remember 1:5, also 2:8, 5:19, and 15:18. That is right living.

Romans chapter six, verses 16 through 18, 8:2-4, 13:14. In theological terms, the way we could put this is that justification is inseparable from regeneration. When we really are pronounced righteous, God has made us righteous. We may not live all that out instantly.

At least in my own case, I have to admit I haven't lived it all out instantly. But what we can say is that we are transformed. We do begin to be transformed from that moment on.

He says this is from faith to faith. Probably what he means there, has been some matter of debate, but probably he means from start to finish, it involves faith. Some have argued it's talking about from Habakkuk 2.4, which is quoted, that it's talking about God's faithfulness and our faith, one of each.

But I don't see how you would be able to figure that out if you didn't already think that. So I think from faith to faith is just saying, following a Greek idiom, it involves faith from start to finish. This is a matter of much debate in terms of what it means by faith in Romans.

Does it mean God's faithfulness or our faith or faithfulness? But the verb *pisteuo* nearly always in Romans has God or Christ as its object. And for that reason, I take on this controversy, it'll come up again in 3:22, but I take the view that what he's referring to is our faith in him. But what does our faith in him mean? Our faith in him is based on his faithfulness.

As we get to know his faithfulness, we depend on him more. The introductory elementary saving faith is pretty introductory, as we'll see when we get to Romans chapter four with the example of Abraham. When he offers up Isaac, that's developed faith through a relationship with God.

But his elementary faith was pretty elementary. And that should be an encouragement to us. It doesn't mean we have to have everything figured out in our heads.

We certainly don't have to have all the details of the Trinity figured out or probably most theologians would be in trouble, right? Because that's something that people have worked very hard and long to try to figure out. What does it mean to have faith in him? It means to realize that he's dependable, and it's better to depend on him than anything else. It doesn't mean suppressing all doubt.

It doesn't mean having a feeling of faith. It means we recognize that he's faithful enough that we commit our salvation to him. It's not a Kierkegaardian leap into the dark.

Kierkegaard had to relate to a certain philosophy of his time. It's not a Kierkegaardian leap into the dark. It's a deliberate step into the light of God's truth in the gospel.

And that's what he's been talking about. There's a contrast with the false ideologies of the world in Romans 1, 18 through 23 and 28, the corrupted mind, the corrupted values of the world, as opposed to the gospel that Paul is proclaiming. Faith in that is trusting the truth.

Faith isn't meant to be make-believe, which is what we often think of when we use the English word in our culture today, my culture today. It doesn't mean just wishing really hard and then it will happen. Kant was actually trying to save a place for faith because some other people didn't allow any room for anything subjective.

And he said, well, faith is subjective. It's in the subjective realm. We separate it from what's objective, which is knowledge.

The problem is that people kept saying, well, the only thing that matters is what's objective. So, Kierkegaard says how do we get across this chasm when faith is merely subjective? Well, you take a leap in the dark or something like that. But that's not what faith is.

Faith is a deliberate step into the light of God's truth. I think, well, how much faith do I need? Jesus said, you just need faith like a grain of mustard seed. The question is not how much faith you have, not how big is your faith, but how big is the God in whom is your faith? That's what faith is about.

Sometimes in the Western world, we've made it more complicated because of our skepticism in scholarly circles. We've made it complicated like, well, you have to work up this faith. You have to answer all the questions.

But when we do that, we make it faith in our faith instead of faith in the faithful God. As it is written, he says, he's going to quote scripture, and he uses this familiar formula that was used in Jewish and Christian citations of scripture, as it is written. In

fact, that goes back to the Old Testament as well, sometimes quoting earlier documents in the Old Testament.

So, he speaks of the righteous one. Well, who is the righteous one? He's quoting from Habakkuk chapter two and verse four. The context in Habakkuk 2:4 is preserving the righteous person in the time of judgment when judgment comes to the land.

Some have taken the righteous person here as Jesus. Of course, Jesus was righteous. No argument there.

Acts 3.14 and 7.52 call him the righteous one. But that doesn't fit any of the other 16 uses of *dikaios*, righteous, in Pauline literature, including in the quotation of the same passage in Galatians 3.11. So that's probably not talking about Jesus being the righteous one here. It's probably talking about the one who is righteous before God, anyone who's righteous before God.

Justified by faithfulness or faith. Faith implies faithfulness and depends on faithfulness. In the Septuagint, the Greek version of Habakkuk 2.4, it speaks of my, God speaking, my faith, my *pistis*.

In Hebrew, it's not speaking of God's faith. It's speaking of the faith of the righteous person. And Paul later does speak of God's faith or faithfulness, his *pistis* in Romans 3:3, meaning his faithfulness, but he doesn't follow the Greek version known to his audience there.

And in this passage, he leaves out the pronoun, probably because he knows that the Hebrew and the Greek don't agree. He probably knows that the Greek does speak of God's faith, God's faithfulness, but the Hebrew speaks of the faith of the righteous person. So, Paul leaves out the pronoun.

In Romans, normally, even though he speaks of God's faithfulness in Romans 3:3, normally he speaks of the believer's *pistis*, chapter 1, verse 8, verse 12, and so on. Even when echoing the same text here in Romans chapter 4 and verse 5. Now, Paul had earlier written a letter to the Galatians. And in Galatians 3.6 and 11, he midrashically links the two biblical texts that mention both righteousness and faith.

The other text clearly refers to a believer's faith, Abraham's faith, Genesis 15:6. So, it's probable that that's the way Paul's interpreting this. I mean, he had enough debates in the synagogues that if he were quoting the Greek version, and even if he didn't have the Hebrew version in mind, somebody would have brought it to his attention by that point. So, he's probably referring here to the believer's faith.

And then he speaks of living by faith. Like some other Pharisaic interpreters, he probably applies live to eternal life. I mean, the principle was surviving the judgment, but the principle extends beyond that.

It's the same principle of how God works for eternal life. And eternal life, when Jewish people spoke of that, by that they normally meant the resurrection life of the coming age, which is how Paul uses the language in Romans 2:7, 5:21, 6:22 and 23, 8:13, 10:5 and 14:9. So, I think I have reason to think that's what it means here as well. Although even though it's the resurrection life of the coming age, believers have already entered it, 6:10 to 13, 8:2, and 8:6. So, what it means is, as it meant in Habakkuk, God preserves from his wrath those who trust in him.

But for Paul's application here, this applies not just to wrath in a particular judgment at a particular time, but ultimately from God's wrath altogether. We're saved from God's wrath. We are spared from God's wrath and therefore we have eternal life, the life of the coming age, the life that refers back to Daniel 12:2, from which Jewish people developed this idea of having the life of the coming age when our bodies are resurrected.

What does he mean by this wrath? How is this wrath expressed? We're going to see that this wrath is expressed by handing people over to their own folly, in a sense by handing people over to moral insanity. And we're going to see this in the next section of Romans chapter one.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 3, Romans 1:2-17.