

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

What the Gospel Is All About
Romans 1:1-17

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

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Find and copy the words to the hymn: **“I Am Satisfied with Jesus”** (enough for the congregation). Use your copying protection plan.

Music Sources:

“Satisfied with Jesus” B.B. McKinney, 1926. #622, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008.

“I Love You, Lord”

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***What the Gospel Is All About*****Focal Text**

Romans 1:1-17

Background Text

Romans 1:1-17

Main Idea

God's power provides wholeness of life to broken people when they receive the gospel.

Question to Explore

What is the gospel all about?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to summarize the meaning of the gospel for their lives.

Gathering together:Sing "I Love You, Lord" Maranatha Praise Chorus Book, Expanded 3rd Edition, 21**First thoughts:****When God Calls**

A missionary remembers her first sense of God's calling in her life. She was part of a small church that shared a pastor with several other small churches. Sunday School happened every Sunday and, during the summer, college students came to lead a two-week long Vacation Bible School. Those dedicated "summer missionaries" so impacted the life of that ten-year-old girl that she knew she would be a summer missionary when she was a university student. That dream came true while she attended a university and was part of an organized group of Christian students who shared the growing understanding of what it means to be called of God to share the good news of Jesus.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Today, we begin a series of studies of the New Testament Book that we call ***Paul's Letter to the Romans***. In this first session, we are going to learn more about Paul's deep desire to share the Gospel with others and the passion he felt about being able to do that alongside other Christians in the great city of Rome. Use the time to consider how you are responding each day to God's call for you to share the Gospel.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

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Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

What the Gospel Is All About

Focal Text

Romans 1:1-17

Background Text

Romans 1:1-17

Main Idea

God’s power provides wholeness of life to broken people when they receive the gospel.

Question to Explore

What is the gospel all about?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to summarize the meaning of the gospel for their lives.

Introduction to your personal study:

Have you ever introduced yourself to someone in a letter? Paul had never been to Rome before, but establishing a relationship with the Christians there was vital to his plans for preaching the gospel in areas that had not yet heard. In the letter to the churches in Rome, Paul introduced himself by laying out his credentials as an apostle of Christ. He also gave them a full description of the gospel message he was preaching so the Roman Christians could make up their minds if he was true to the Christian faith. In this letter we find one of the most significant statements of the meaning of the gospel of Christ – a message all people desperately need to hear. The gospel certainly is “Good News for a Troubled World.”

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

This session begins a series of studies of the Letter to the Romans. We will examine this profoundly rich book of insights into God’s view of sin, grace, and the Christian walk by presenting it as Paul did. We will begin with Chapter 1 and follow through to the end. Thirteen sessions for Bible teaching and worship within four units will provide enough time and opportunity to bring dramatic changes in our lives and in those who come seeking to know God.

If you have followed the suggested order of studies in this series of Bible teaching and worship experiences, you have just completed the units on the Book of Acts. There, at the end of the book, we left Paul in prison in Rome. In our new series in the **Letter to the churches in Rome**, or simply **Romans** as we know it, one must move back just a bit in time, also to a different place of writing, a different author, and a distinctly different purpose.

You remember that the physician, Dr. Luke, wrote Acts as the second narrative to “Theophilus”. He wrote it to accurately document the moving of God’s Spirit into and through those who accepted Jesus as the Christ and put their faith and hope of eternity in Him. He wrote to convince people to believe in the truth of the acts taking place and, in believing, become followers of “The Way”.

In The Letter to the Churches in Rome, the apostle Paul writes a completely different kind of letter or book. Paul is not yet in Rome. He writes from Corinth to the people who make up the church in Rome. They lived in the midst of growing persecution of Christians in and around that great capital city. They needed unity, instruction, and encouragement.

Paul was probably in Corinth on his third missionary journey when he wrote the Book of Romans. Having almost finished his work in the eastern Mediterranean, Paul was now setting his sights on areas completely yet untouched by the gospel—specifically in this case, Spain (15:20, 24, 28). First, he wanted to visit Jerusalem with the money he collected from the Greek churches for the impoverished Christians living in Judea (15:25-27)—and then proceed to Rome.

The church in Rome was made up of both Jewish and Gentile Christians (1:5-6, 13; 11:13), and Paul had never visited there before, even though he knew quite a few believers there personally or by reputation (16:1-16). Paul wanted to develop a relationship with the Roman church for their prayer support, fellowship, and financial support for his desired ministry in Spain (15:24). He probably wanted them to become his “home church” in the western Mediterranean, much like the church in Antioch had supported him in his missionary journeys in the east.

Having never visited Rome before, Paul wrote this letter to prepare them for his visit. He introduced himself by displaying his credentials as an apostle commissioned by God and by letting them hear a full description of the gospel message that he preached. He also sought to ease some tensions and bring harmony in the Roman church between the Jewish and Gentile believers; specifically over the role of God's law in the believer's life.

To do this, he develops two main themes in this letter. First, all people (whether Jew or Gentile) are guilty sinners before God and are saved only by God's grace extended to them through Jesus Christ and accepted by faith. No one merits this salvation; it comes by faith alone. Second, Paul redefines the concept of "God's people." The Jews could no longer claim this special status as their sole possession. Rather, anyone who places his or her faith in Jesus, no matter their ethnic origin or religious practice (e.g. circumcision, dietary laws) becomes a true child of Abraham.

Focusing on the Meaning:

1:1-7 – "The Gospel of God Regarding His Son"

vv. 1-3a – "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God – the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding His Son"

Paul introduced himself to the Roman Christians. As "**a servant** (or slave) **of Christ Jesus**", he had handed control of his life over to his Lord. An **apostle** was someone specially chosen and sent out by Jesus to preach with his authority. Paul had received his commissioning as an apostle at his conversion experience (Acts 26:17). He was also "**set apart for the gospel of God**", that is, the focus of his task was to preach, defend, and uphold the gospel message for all people.

What is "**the gospel of God**"? The word "gospel" means "good news," so "the gospel of God" is God's message of good news for all sinners "**promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures**" (i.e. the Old Testament) "**concerning His Son**" (i.e. Jesus). God's good news is that Jesus provides the way to salvation. The whole focus of gospel is the message about who Jesus is and what he accomplished for us through his death and resurrection.

vv. 3b-4 – "who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." As a descendant of David through his human father, Jesus was the promised Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved that he was the Son of God. As the Son of David Jesus came to earth as a human, but today he reigns as the powerful Son of God because he conquered death. Therefore, Jesus Christ (i.e. Jesus the Messiah) deserves to be **our Lord**, the master and ruler of our lives.

vv. 5-6 – “Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you are also among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.” Paul attributed his call to be an apostle as an act of God’s grace. His special calling from God was to offer salvation to the Gentiles. The scope of his calling was **“all the Gentiles,”** therefore all people in the world have a right to hear the gospel. True saving faith will demonstrate itself in obedience to God’s commands (Ephesians 2:8-10) resulting in a total, unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ. Any faith that does not result in a life of obedience is not a true saving faith. Salvation is accomplished only **“through him,”** and Paul sought to win the Gentiles to faith in Christ **“for his name’s sake,”** that is, honor and glory of Christ’s name, and his alone.

v. 7 – “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Roman Christians were **“loved by God”** because they were God’s own children. They were also **“called to be saints,”** or “holy ones,” a calling not for just a select few but a calling for all those who have been saved by his grace. People can experience God’s peace with him and with each other only after they have been touched by his marvelous grace.

1:8-13 – “I Long to See You”

v. 8 – “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.” Paul thanked God for the Roman Christians and their witness that had become well known. Therefore, apparently the work in Rome was well established at the time Paul was writing the letter.

vv. 9-13 – “God, whom I serve with my whole heart 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. I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong – that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the Gentiles.” Paul prayed for them regularly and eagerly desired that God open a way for him to come to Rome and meet with them face to face. Paul had several reasons for desiring to meet them in Rome. First, **“that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong,”** that is to give them a spiritual blessing that would strengthen them, probably his teaching. Second, **“that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith,”** that Paul would receive the benefit of his Christian fellowship with these dear brothers and sisters. Third, **“that I may have a harvest among you,”** that is Paul wanted to participate in the gospel harvest in Rome as he had experienced it among the Gentiles elsewhere. His greatest desire was to win lost people to Christ.

1:14-17 – “The Power of God for Salvation”

vv. 14-15 – “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.” Paul stated that he was **“obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks.”** He had a debt to pay, not a debt in which he had borrowed something from these people, but a treasure that Christ had given him to give to others. **“Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish”** includes all people, specifically the Gentiles to whom Christ had commissioned him. To Paul, spreading the gospel to lost people is not an option. It is an obligation. We have no right to keep it to ourselves.

v. 16 – “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” Paul had no reluctance in sharing the gospel, but would stand proudly and proclaim it **because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.** God's power is demonstrated by setting people free from their sin. **“Everyone who believes”** includes Jews and Gentiles. All are free to receive God's gift of salvation. As God's covenant people, the Jews received the message first (Acts 13:46) before the door was opened to the Gentiles.

v. 17 – “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” The gospel reveals God's **“righteousness.”** Righteousness is God's moral character that is the perfect standard of truth and integrity. Because righteousness is his character, then everything he does is “righteous.” When people stand in a right relationship with him and display his character, they are in turn “righteous.” When Paul used the phrase **“a righteousness from God,”** he spoke of God's righteous character that reached down to unholy men and through the good news of Jesus Christ made them to stand in a right relationship to himself. Our righteousness can only be received **“by faith.”**

The terms “believe” (v. 16) and “faith,” come from the same Greek word. Paul gave a clue to their meaning by quoting from an Old Testament passage, Habakkuk 2:4. The term in the original Old Testament Hebrew means “faithfulness” or “steadfastness.” Therefore, “believing the gospel” or “having faith in Christ Jesus” is more than believing with one's mind, but rather is planting one's life firmly in Christ Jesus, never to be moved again. It is a determined choice of the will, a deliberate decision to give Jesus control of one's life from now on. Saving faith is thus solid, steadfast, and faithful. It will produce “an obedience that comes from faith” (v. 5).

Paul's Old Testament quote can be taken in two different ways. **“By faith,”** either goes with the phrase **“the righteous”** (i.e. “righteous by faith”) or with the phrase **“will live”** (i.e. “will live by faith”). If with the former, Paul is referring to how a person becomes righteous in the first place, i.e. “The one who becomes righteous by their faith in Christ will be given the gift of eternal life.” If with the latter, then Paul is referring to the manner in which a righteous person will live, they will live “by faith.” Paul seems to be referring here to the former meaning, that is, how someone becomes righteous before God, by placing his/her faith in Christ (Galatians 3:11). Salvation is **“by faith from first to last.”**

Your Goal as Leader of the Bible Study:

This session introduces a very important document—the letter from Paul to the church in Rome. We would hold a very incomplete understanding of the “gospel of Jesus Christ” without this letter. With it, we can better grasp the scope of the gospel: how it changes our lives; relates us to God as his children; provides the reason and compulsion for going around the world to share the Good News. As the Bible study leader for this session, your task will be to open the study of Romans in such a way that the congregation leaves with a distinct excitement for the studies to follow from this wonderful letter.

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**
2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**
3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

What the Gospel Is All About

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Romans 1:1-17

Background Text

Romans 1:1-17

Main Idea

God's power provides wholeness of life to broken people when they receive the gospel.

Question to Explore

What is the gospel all about?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to summarize the meaning of the gospel for their lives.

Connect with Life:

As the group gathers, ask them "What does the term 'gospel' mean to you?" Let them respond, but you may need to help them with the definition. The term means "good news," and the four books of the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus' life and ministry we call "Gospels," or "good news stories."

Explain that today's lesson is the beginning of a series of studies in the book of Romans. Give them a brief overview of the background of the book of Romans taken from the Background section of the commentary. Explain that in this book Paul was describing the "gospel" that he preached to the Christians in Rome who had never met him. In the first several chapters of the book, Paul described what the gospel is.

Guide the Study:

1. The gospel is God's message of good news (vv. 1-2).

Ask a volunteer to read verses 1-2.

Ask: "What words did Paul use to describe himself in these verses?" (servant, apostle, set-apart) Be prepared to help them if they need any of these words defined.

Then ask: "Why would it be significant that the gospel is 'the gospel of God'? How much more authority does that give the message than if it were merely Paul's (or yours or my) opinion?"

2. The gospel is focused upon Jesus (vv. 3-6).

Request that someone read verses 3-6, then ask: "According to verse 3, what is the subject of the gospel?" (Jesus) "How could Jesus be the most important good news that people could hear?"

Discuss for a few minutes about doing ministry for other people and if we have truly helped them if we have neglected to tell them of Jesus.

Ask: "What names does Paul attribute to Jesus?" (His [God's] Son, son of David, Son of God, Jesus Christ, Lord) Be ready to help them if any of these names are unclear.

State, "Paul was to call people 'to the obedience that comes from faith' (v. 5). Isn't it all right simply to believe in Jesus?" Explain that true faith demonstrates itself in obedience (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10).

3. The gospel is a message that must be shared with everyone (vv. 7-16).

Ask someone to read verses 7-16, but have the group listen for indications of the kinds of people Paul wanted to share the gospel with ("that I may impart to you some spiritual gift" [v. 11], "that I may have a harvest among you" [v. 13], "I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish" [v. 14], "I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome" [v. 15], "for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" [v. 16]).

Then ask: "According to Paul, then, who deserves to hear the gospel message?" (everyone)

Ask: "What phrases in verses 14-16 show that Paul did not take his responsibility of preaching the gospel lightly?" ("I am obligated" [v. 14], "I am eager" [v. 15], "I am not ashamed" [v. 16])

Then ask the group, “Do you feel that sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with lost people is an obligation for you? Why or why not? Is it something that you are `eager’ and `not ashamed’ to do? Why or why not? If everyone deserves to hear it, what should our response be?”

4. The gospel is powerful enough to save everyone who believes (vv. 16-17).

Ask someone to read verses 16-17.

Then ask: “Is everyone automatically saved by hearing the gospel, or is some response expected of them?” (believe, faith) Be ready to describe what “believing” or “having faith” means according to the Scripture.

Ask: “What does “righteousness” mean?” (truth and integrity) Point out that those who have faith in this “righteous God” will take on His character and stand in a right relationship to God.

State: “The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” (v. 16). “From what does God set people free?” (sin)

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask the group to respond orally to these questions, “In light of what we have heard in this passage:

1. What are some things God wants us to believe?
2. Is there anything God wants us to do?
3. Is there a promise here that God wants us to claim?
4. Is there an example here that we need to follow?”

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

What the Gospel Is All About **Romans 1:1-17**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Me and My Life!

Paul calls himself a “slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle”. Most teens are considering their future. You may be asking yourself questions like these:

- 1) “What do I want to study?”
- 2) “What am I good at doing?”
- 3) “What can I do to earn enough money for me to do the things I enjoy?”
- 4) “Where can I go to college or university given the realities of my high school grades and my financial situation?”
- 5) “What sort of person do I want for my husband or wife who can be a vital part of my life’s goals—and not just go along with them?”

On a piece of paper try to express what it would mean in answering these questions if you felt called by God in a special way.

You may feel that God is calling you to be or do something special—or serve Him in some special place away from your home area. If so, find a trusted friend—an older person with more life experience—and talk to him or her about your feelings in this—your sense of God calling you.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***What the Gospel Is All About***
Romans 1:1-17**Beginning the Service:**

Worship Leader: Ask everyone to stand and sing “Tell the Good News”, *The Worship Hymnal* (2008) #360.

Note to Leader: This hymn is meant to be sung “quick and lively”. It is easy for children to learn and has a great message. If your congregation does not know it, it is worth copying the words and learning (if you have copying rights). When finished, be seated.

Either provide enough copies of hymnals containing the words to “**Satisfied with Jesus**” for your congregation to read together or copy the words using your copyright permission. If copied, alternate lines with light italicized print and regular, bold print. Copy and read responsively only the verses—not the chorus. (By B. B. McKinney, 1926—to be used only by permission of Lifeway Worship or under your CCLI status.)

Leader: We begin today’s time of worship with a “responsive” reading. I will read the light print of each verse. Then, together, we will all read the bold print.

Read verses of “**Satisfied with Jesus**”.

Offering:

Leader: Evangelism is a word that sounds big, brave, and something that only preachers and missionaries do. It really just means to share what Jesus has done in your life with someone else. One way that we can share with people that we will never meet is to enable other Christians to share the Gospel for us in places, languages, and ways that we cannot share. Part of the offerings that we give to our church will help support some who are able to live in parts of the world where we cannot live; and there share Christ with others in our place.

Have a child take up the offering in a basket or bag—or explain how your church receives tithes and offerings if it is not received during the worship session.

Praying for the World:

We may hear of Christians who work in the context of a “Rescue Mission” offering a place to live, counselling and job training to those who have experienced extreme difficulties in life. Those who come to the Rescue Mission may have been released from prison, suffer from depression or schizophrenia, or be recovering from alcoholism and/or drugs. Some have made an honest commitment to Christ, but find that their life history makes it hard for them to live in society. They have some good days, but it is a hard struggle to rebuild a life.

Pray today for those men and women. Pray also for the men and women called of God to bring the message of salvation and to walk with these people who struggle. Discouragement, disillusionment, and pain come to these faithful servants. They may find it difficult to be a part of a healthy church fellowship because of the huge commitment of time and energy they give to their ministry. Pray that they will have time for prayer and Bible study and be encouraged by others in the Christian community.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

On Assignment: Authorized to Proclaim God’s Words and Acts

On assignment is a term well known in today’s world. We may think of a reporter on assignment to a special place or person or world event. Our awareness of the importance of this assignment has been heightened as we have heard of reporters embedded with an army in war torn countries such as Iraq. These reporters have seen the importance of their work so keenly that they have been willing to experience the same dangers and inconveniences of the troops themselves. For a certain period of time, their whole lives are involved in this endeavour; there are no coffee breaks; no weekends. It is an all day, every day, kind of commitment.

Paul speaks of his assignment with the same intensity. ***“Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle and singled out for God’s good news.”*** (Romans 1:1 personal translation). Paul, on assignment as an apostle had been singled out both to receive and to share God’s good news. ***“We have received grace and apostleship through Him to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations, on behalf of His name.”*** (Romans 1:5); ***“Through Christ we received both the generous gift of his life and the urgent task of passing it on to others who receive it by entering into obedient trust in Jesus”*** (The Message, Romans 1:5.)

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What could have been more urgent in Paul's day than the task of passing on the good news of Jesus Christ to others? What is more urgent in our day than passing on the good news of Jesus Christ to others who receive it by entering into obedient trust in Jesus?

Paul saw his assignment as one in which he was to bless others and in which he would receive blessing from others. ***“For I want very much to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine”*** (Romans 1:11).

If our assignment is, like Paul's, a twenty-four hour a day, no coffee break, no weekends sort of affair, then we must receive as well as give. We will not last long in the hard work of sharing with others and ministering to others, if we do not recognize that in so doing we will ourselves be blessed. ***“Mutual encouragement”*** must include a sharing of the struggles of ministry, a genuine joy in the successes of ministry attained by fellow workers and genuine pleasure in the fellowship of other believers. Paul expressed his longing to see and know the fellow Christians in Rome. He commended them for the faith that was so newsworthy that it was being reported in all the world. Paul feels he has something to offer the Roman Christians—***“For I want very much to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you”***—but he also acknowledged that the Christians in Rome had something to offer him.

Often, on assignment, we work hard and without knowing it, begin to believe that we are the only ones who are working hard. How often we see in churches and Christian organizations the willing worker who attempts a task alone, spends many hours in preparing food for a banquet, painting the church basement or hosting the youth group week after week. Suddenly, he/she resigns his/her position, leaves the church fellowship and often nurses bitterness. Even though they may not have asked for help and in fact may have done things that hindered others from helping them, they feel wronged. They may never have learned that the assignments God gives are to be shared with others – giving and receiving the blessings.

Reporters given choice assignments have proven their worth in other less glamorous and often less dangerous assignments. Paul had been delayed in going to Rome by many other tasks. Some were undoubtedly dangerous and exciting; others were, no doubt, more mundane. When he writes to the Roman Christians, he expresses the intensity of his belief. ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. For in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’*** (Romans 1:16-17).

Earlier Paul had said to the Romans and to all believers: ***“We have received grace and apostleship through Him to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations on behalf of His name; including yourselves who are also Jesus Christ's by calling”*** (Romans 1:5.)

Call to Commitment:

These verses declare that Paul was set apart for a special assignment. But they indicate that we share in that assignment as believers in Jesus Christ. Paul's part in his earthly assignment ended many years ago although his passionate cry: ***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes"*** (Romans 1:16) is as fresh to our hearts as it must have been to the Roman Christians. We like Paul must be true to the assignment we have been given. May we say with vigour and integrity ***"I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes."***

Concluding the Service:

Sing together as a prayer of promise to God: **"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"**.

First read the verse and then ask everyone to repeat together:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes." Romans 1:16

Repeat the reading done during the beginning of the Worship Time **"I Am Satisfied with Jesus"**.