



Paul's Heart and the Heart of the Gospel Romans 1:1-17

Something to Start Us Off

- If you were going to move to a new city and wanted the church there to know who you really are and what you're most passionate about, how would you introduce yourself in just a paragraph or two? Paul does exactly that in these 17 verses.

Something to Notice

Let's read Romans 1:1-17 slowly and mark every phrase that tells us something important. Here are a few that might stand out to us.

- Paul describes himself using three phrases which can also describe each of us.
 - A servant (slave) of Jesus Christ
 - Called to be ...
 - Set apart for ...
- See v.5 for the phrase "the obedience of faith." Now read Romans 16:26. These are the only two verses in the Bible where this phrase appears. Their locations in Romans tell us that Paul considered this an important idea. (For homework, look up *inclusio*.)
- See Romans 1:8-10 for some of the content of Paul's prayers.

Something to Learn

Key Insights:

* These 17 verses are the longest and most theologically packed introduction of any New Testament letter—Paul is laying the foundation for everything that follows.

* The gospel is both ancient (promised in the Old Testament) and brand-new (revealed in the resurrection of Jesus). See 1:2-4.

* Note Paul's heart in 1:14-16. "I am under obligation; I am eager; I am not ashamed."

Discussion Questions:

- Paul calls himself a "slave" (*doulos*) of Christ Jesus right out of the gate. What does that say about his view of his own life and calling?
- Paul says the Roman Christians are "called to ...?" Can we discuss these points?
- What does it look like practically to live out v. 17—"The righteous will live by faith"? Give a real-life example.

Something to Take Home

- Memorize and/or meditate on Romans 1:16-17 this week. Let these verses sink in deeply. The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.