

Study in Romans

Doctrine > Introduction > Thesis

Romans 1:16-17

Paul's Executive Summary of the Epistle

These two verses launch the theology half of Romans with a bold summary of what Paul is about to unpack over the next eleven chapters. In this thesis, he introduces the major themes he will unpack over the next 11 chapters.

1. Theme: **The Gospel will bring pressure and persecution** (“I am not ashamed of the gospel [of Christ]”)
 - a. Paul's bold, confident example has inspired the church throughout the ages. He would have a chance to put it in action in front of their very eyes in a few years. (2 Cor. 11:22-29, 12:7-10)
 - b. In a similar manner, all Saints will suffer for the gospel in some way. (2 Cor. 4:7-18)
2. Theme: **The Gospel is the power (“dunamis”) of God for salvation**
 - a. God alone can redeem the dead heart of man, can cause him to be born again
 - b. Salvation = comes from Greek root for Deliverer. It means to be delivered or rescued.
 - c. Paul is not ashamed of it though it is misunderstood by many because it contains real and effective power from God. The servant of God will not, in the end, be unsuccessful. (1 Cor. 15:58)

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
1 Cor. 15:58
 - d. What are we delivered/saved/rescued from?
3. Theme: **The Gospel requires belief and is by faith**
 - a. Belief is a part of faith. More than mere intellectual assent, this belief requires the special interjection of God's power into the heart of the believer.
 - b. It is manifested in all three aspects of the heart: mind, emotions, will
4. Theme: **The Gospel is for everyone, both Jew and Gentile**
 - a. The gospel breaks down the dividing walls of separation between people (Eph. 2:11-22)
 - b. It repairs relationships
 - i. With God (vertical)
 - ii. With each other (horizontal)
5. Theme: **The Gospel reveals a righteousness that is God's**
 - a. Martin Luther called it an “alien righteousness,” that is, not of human origin. (Cf. 3:21)
6. Theme: **The Gospel is accessed by faith from first to last**
 - a. Means, “by faith into faith” or “from faith unto faith”
 - b. Could mean:
 - i. By faith from Jew to Gentile
 - ii. By faith from for each believer from first to last
 - c. Second meaning is what Paul emphasizes in Romans, the idea of a walk of faith. The believer lives each moment by faith to faith, accessing God's grace by this mechanism.
 - d. Sovereignty is the summary term for God's involvement in the Gospel. Faith is the summary term for the saint's involvement in the Gospel.
7. Theme: **The Gospel was God's plan all along, even in the OT**
 - a. Paul quotes from Habakkuk 2:4
 - b. Emphasis in Hab. 2:4: “The righteous will live by his faith.”