

2. Paul's Gospel Part 1 (Rom. 1.18-5.11)

a) 1.18-3.20 – 'We're all in this together' - The Human Predicament

(i) 1.18-23 God Revealed

- The wrath of God is *revealed* (1.18, cf. 'revealed' 1.17).
- The wrath and holiness of God.
- *Revelation* is the key category – God has made himself known, and humans have turned away.
- Idolatry (1.23)

"NOT TO CRITICIZE, BUT PAUL COULD HAVE MADE ROMANS SO MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE BY SHORTENING HIS SENTENCES, SIMPLIFYING HIS THOUGHTS, AND DROPPING IN A COUPLE OF FUNNY STORIES!"



(ii) 1.24-32 Runaway hearts and minds

- What is the force of *therefore* (1.24)?
- Hearts (1.24), and minds (1.28)
- Sexuality is in view (1.24, 26) – is it a focus or an example?
- Other vices are included (1.28-32)
- A Jewish list

(iii) 2.1-29 No excuses

- Jews and Gentiles alike fall under the condemnation. All are condemned, but all can be saved. God has no favourites (2.11).
- The Law heard is different from the Law obeyed (2.13); therefore Gentiles may have obeyed the Law instinctively (2.14-16). But this cuts both ways. If their conscience testify to the Law, then it can also testify to their guilt. There's no way out.
- Jews as Lights to the Gentiles. Being Jewish as such confers no privilege. Obeying the Law is what matters, and that is the sign, not (e.g.) circumcision (2.17-29).

(iv) 3.1-20 So what's the point of being a Jew?

- God remains faithful (3.3-4) – a key theme of Romans. Israel is the forerunner of righteousness, chosen not for their goodness but as an example of mercy. Here is how God deals with his runaway creation.
- Jews are not a different kind of human being. The function of the Law is to diagnose sin and the human condition (3.19-20).

b) 3.21-5.11 Righteousness, Peace and Reconciliation*(i) 3.21-31 Faith in Jesus is what matters*

- God's righteousness revealed irrespective of the Law, but backed up by it (3.21-22); it is Jesus Christ who brings it for all who believe (3.22).
- Faith *in* or faith *of* (3.22)?
- Redemption and sacrifice (3.24-25).
- God does not give up – he remains faithful (3.25-26).
- Boasting has no place because it's all the work of God (3.27-31)

Righteousness/righteous

Paul talks a lot in Romans about righteousness and being made righteous, and it carries the meaning of being made acceptable to God. He uses several words for this which all come from the same root, but English has no verb that is equivalent to it, and so most translations opt for a word like 'justify' when Paul has written that we are 'righteoused'. Morna Hooker suggests using the English verb 'to right', 'which normally means "to restore to the proper position" (as with a boat) but can also mean to vindicate or avenge (as in righting wrongs), to rehabilitate or put right.' (*Paul: A Short Introduction* OneWorld 2003, pp.74-5.)

(ii) 4.1-25 *Introducing the first witness:
Abraham*

- Abraham is reckoned righteous by God *before* circumcision (4.10). He is the ancestor of the circumcised and predates Moses. He was 'righteoused/righted' before the Law and Moses.
- The promise of God is all that is needed (4.16-25)

(iii) 5.1-11 *Peace with God*

- Headline recapitulated (5.1-2)
- Boasting again: but this is the proper stuff, boasting about God so that his grace gets the credit (5.2-5)
- Jesus came and got us (5.6-11)
- Reconciliation – more than personal salvation (5.10-11)?