**Romans: The Gospel of Salvation**

***Session 8; Romans 14 – 16; The End of the Story***

Introduction

* What qualified the apostle Paul to bring something from the Jewish world to the Roman world.
* Paul stood in two worlds. He knew the Jewish Scripture inside and out but yet he was a Roman citizen.
* He knew the Roman culture and was able to bring the Gospel into the heart of the Roman empire.
* Paul had to work through a dramatic transition. For Paul and other Jewish Christians there was one universal church. There was no longer a division between Jew and Gentile.
* Paul is writing to those who are weak and those who are strong. For Paul those who are wear are those who are very attached to Jewish customs and rituals.
* For Paul those who are strong are those who have felt the freedom that the works of the law have given way to the universality of faith.
* Paul is navigating Jewish and Gentile relations. He exercises pastoral sensitivity for those who are attached to the old way.
* He is also teaching the truth about what the new way means. It will take time for everybody to come together on this.
* Paul was a pastor who knew life on the ground. In Romans 15:25, Paul references that he is going to Jerusalem with aid from the saints.
* There was a famine in Israel and the Jewish Christians were in need. Paul has aid from the Gentile churches that he is bringing to the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem.
* The Gentiles had come to share in the Jews spiritual blessing and were now of service to the Jewish Christians in their material blessings.
* Paul sees great spiritual symbolism in the Gentiles helping the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem materially.
* The Gentiles have come to share in Israel’s spiritual inheritance. It is fitting that they would help out materially with the Christians in Jerusalem.
* It is a new found beauty in the family of God of Jew and Gentile coming together in this universal Catholic family of God.

Romans 16:22

***“I, Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet in the Lord.”***

* Paul dictated the Letter to the Romans to a scribe. This is significant.
* In Paul’s “Letter to the Corinthians” and his “Letter to the Galatians”, Paul identifies himself as the writer of those letters.
* It is accepted that Paul was literate, yet he used a scribe to dictate the “Letter to the Romans”.
* Christian skeptics argue that we do not know who wrote the Gospels of Mark and Luke.
* Mark was a disciple of Peter. It is believed that Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark from Peter’s preaching in Rome.
* Luke was a disciple of Paul. Luke was a Greek physician who wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.
* Paul was the primary source for the Gospel of Luke. That Paul, who was literate, used a scribe to write letters affirms that Mark was Peter’s scribe.

Romans 16:25-27

***“Now to him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages*** ***but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.”***

* Jew and Gentile now come together in a way that never happened before. They come together in Christ in one new covenant family of God.
* ***“to bring about the obedience of faith,”.*** There is a vertical and horizontal dimension of the Gospel.
* It is seen horizontally because now the Gospel is universal. It is vertical in that it is the gift of the divine spirit that empowers us to live a life of obedience to faith.
* Salvation is not just a divine acquittal. It is not just forgiveness of sins. It is becoming a child of God and growing up in the family of God.
* God loves us just the way we are but too much to leave us that way.
* God calls us to grace. This is the dynamic of covenant love
* Paul wrote to Rome ten years prior to his death. He was in Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey (57AD).
* When Paul has collected the aid for the Christians of Jerusalem, he returns to Jerusalem. He knows that he will be persecuted there.
* When Paul does return to Rome, he is arrested. As the same with Jesus, the Jewish authorities seek the Roman authorities to put Paul to death.
* The accusations against Paul are the same accusations against Jesus: He is speaking against the Law and the temple.
* Paul is taken to Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea and it there for two years.
* As a Roman citizen, Paul appeals to Caesar. As a Roman citizen he had a right to have his case heard by Caesar.
* Paul wanted to get to Rome. He was able to appeal to Caesar to be sent to Rome as a prisoner.
* Paul was under house arrest in Rome for two years.
* The emperor that Paul appealed to was Nero. He seems to have gotten out and according to early Christian tradition he made good on his journey to Spain.
* At some point he returns to Rome. Both Paul and Peter will be caught up in Nero’s persecution of the Christians.
* Peter was not a Roman citizen and was crucified. As a Roman citizen, Paul was beheaded.
* In 67 AD Paul is put to death. The last letter he wrote was 2 Timothy 6-7
* ***“For I am already at the point of being sacrificed, the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.”***
* At the hour of our death may we be able to speak these words.