

## The Man, The Message and The Mandate - Romans 1: 1-7

It is no exaggeration to state that this is 'the greatest letter ever written'. William Tyndale (Great English Bible Translator and martyr) called it '*the principle most excellent part of the New Testament*'. The reading of this letter has sparked many great revivals, not least the historic reformation of the 1500's that resulted in the Protestant church of which ChristCentral is one! Throughout Church history, we have endless accounts and biographies of men and women who knew remarkable conversions having read this book, both rebels and religious zealots, 'bad' people and 'good' people, atheists, theists, agnostics, all kinds of people!

Martin Luther, the man largely attributed as the leader of the Great Reformation said this of Romans:

*'This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word (!), by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul'*

**Q. Have you read Romans before? If so, can you resonate with Luther's comment?**

### 1) The Man – Verse 1

When you read through Acts (ch 8) and Paul's other epistles (letters – particularly Philippians 3) you get a good sense of who this man was. Simply put, he was a great enemy of Christians. He described himself as a 'Pharisee of Pharisees' (indicating he was a great scholar of the scriptures) a man who hunted down Christians and sought to destroy the early church. How incredible is it then, that this man should be attributed as the author of the 'most excellent part of the New Testament'! What happened to him? He met Jesus! On the road to Damascus, Saul (as he was known) had a vivid encounter with Jesus that changed him forever. Paul calls himself a 'servant' or a slave of Jesus Christ.

**Q. What do you think Paul means by being a 'slave' of Jesus?**

*"You are not your own, for you were bought with a price"* 1 Cor 6:19-20 – what light does this verse shed on being a 'slave'?

The crucial insight we receive in verse one, is not "who Paul is but 'whose Paul is' – and this will in the end, be what makes your life significant or not – not who you are, but whose you are" (Piper)

**Q. Do you agree with the comment above from Piper?**

**Q. What do you think it means for Paul to be 'set apart for the gospel'? In Galatians 1:15 Paul writes 'God... set me apart even from my mother's womb' – if this is true what are we to make of Paul's life before he met Jesus? Of the way he persecuted? What that all a mistake? Or Did God have a plan in it?**

### 2) The Message – Verse 3-4

**Q. Look at verses 3 and 4 can you see some of the core gospel elements that Paul identifies here?**

**Q. Why are these various aspects of Christ (His humanity, divinity, death and resurrection) so crucial to the gospel?**

### 3) The Mandate – Verse 5b

Paul understood that the goal of his calling was to bring about the 'obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations'. The call to 'obedience' might not sound especially exciting but when we realise what the goal of obedience is in our lives it becomes a far more wonderful invitation.

*"Happy are those who obey the Lord"* (Psalm 128 GNT)

**Q. Why does our obedience lead to joy?**