

**ROMANS (THE CONSTITUTION OF YOUR FAITH)
PROGRAM 2 (#912132)
WEEK 1 (912328)
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SERIES: Romans (The Constitution Of Your Faith)

TITLE: Program 2 – The Gospel – The Power Of God Unto Salvation

TUESDAY

OPEN

You turn on the news and you hear about another tragedy. What kind of a future are we facing? And is there anything that can turn our society around? Oh my friend, there is something that can turn our society around. There is something that can come along and divert us from all the iniquity, all the sin that we're in and that something is what we're going to talk about today.

PART ONE

The capital of iniquity, the capital of crime, the capital of pornography, the capital of abortion, the capital of murder, where would you look? Where would you go? What part of the map would you point to? Well in our day, you know where you'd point? You would point to the United States of America. We are the exporters of sin. We are the exporters of sin. We are the exporters of pornography. We are the exporters of immorality. We are the exporters of every degrading thing that a person can get involved in.

We're the exporters of those things. You know when you look at the Bible you find out that we're very much like Rome, the Rome that existed in the days of Jesus Christ, the Rome that went ahead and crucified Jesus Christ, the Rome that took the Christians and persecuted them. You saw the movie "Gladiator". You saw other movies that have to do with the Roman Empire. You saw that famous old movie "Spartacus". You saw all these, these that centered around the Christ of the ancient days and the Christians that followed Jesus Christ. Paul sits down and he writes a letter to the church that is at Rome. This is the letter that you and I are studying. This is the letter that I want to become a part of you. This is the letter that I want you to understand for yourself. Why? Because this is the letter that talks about the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is, "... the power of God unto salvation, unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew and also to the Greek or to the Gentile." Now when Paul sits down to write this letter, he's on his third missionary journey. The time is about 56, 57, some say 58 A.D. The exact year doesn't make a difference. Rome is the power of the world. And Rome is the capital, the exporter of all the degradation that goes throughout the rest of the Roman world. And Rome was the supreme ruler at that time. There are about 60,000 Jews living in Rome at this time. Paul wants to come to Rome. There's a church at Rome and Paul wants to get to that church because there are things that he wants to do. He's on his third missionary journey. He's going to go back to Jerusalem. He's going to deliver some money that he has collected for the saints to help them and when he goes back to Jerusalem he is going to be arrested. He's going to be arrested and he is going to be brought to Rome in chains. Now he doesn't know that when he writes this epistle. All he knows is that he wants to go to Rome. And you know what? God sends him. He doesn't think that he's going to go this way in chains, but however he gets to Rome is fine with Paul because Paul has a passion. And you know what? That passion is fulfilled. Are you passionate about anything? Let me ask you a question. Are you passionate

about anything that is outside yourself? Are you passionate about anything that is good for you and not destructive to you? So many people are passionate and they're driven and they're compelled, but they're driven and compelled towards what is evil. It's almost like they are caught in chains and they're slaves and they can't get set free. Well this book is about the gospel of Jesus Christ that sets us free, that sets us free, set us free from three things. It sets us free, first of all from the penalty of sin. It sets us free, second of all, from the power of sin, the power of sin that holds us like this. And third it tells about how someday you and I will be set free from the presence of sin. You know when September 11th happened all of a sudden the world was awake. And what did they want to know? They went running to people that knew the Bible and they wanted to know is this the time of the end. What is happening? What is happening? Is it going to get better? Is it going to get worse? Is God judging us? That's what they wanted to know. All of a sudden in one day in three acts of horrible terrorism our eyes were suddenly opened and we realized our own vulnerability and we wanted answers. And you know what? The statistics tell us that the churches were packed. They were absolutely packed after 9/11. That was a Tuesday and on Sunday and even before that, people were at the church. They wanted to know what was going on. Paul's writing to the church at Rome. And what I want us to do is remember I'm teaching you how to mark the Bible. I'm teaching you how to study it yourself. Why? Because, believe me, you're going to hear so many messages. If you ever turn on a Christian television station and you listen from morning to night, you're going to get conflicting messages. You're going to get the opinions of some people. You're going to get the revelations of others. You're going to hear the prophecies that they feel that God has given them and how are you going to sort it all out? Well I believe that the reason God laid this on my heart, to do this study with you, is because God wants you to learn how to sort out things so that you don't have to run to somebody else for the answers, but you know how to run to

the Word of God and find the answers. So this is what we're going to do. I hope you have the text of Romans in front of you. I hope that you've written us and that you've gotten the booklet on Romans. I hope that you have the colored pencils that you need to mark the text with. If not, listen carefully, whenever you read a book of the Bible you need to ask yourself the five W's and an H. Those are questions of observation. You need to ask who: who is writing, to whom are they writing, who are they talking about? Who, what: what are they talking about, what is the subject, what is the event that is going on? Who, what, when: when is this taking place? Where is it taking place? Who, what, when, where: where is it occurring, where will it occur, where did it happen? All right, who, what, when, where, you got it. Why? I need to know the who, the what, the when, the where, the why and that H, the how. When you read a book of the Bible, especially an epistle; an epistle is a letter and that's what Romans is. Romans is a letter that the apostle Paul sat down and wrote to the church at Rome about 56, 57, or 58 A.D. Now he wrote it. We know that he wrote it, because he starts, which is traditional in their writing, he starts with his name. He starts with his name and description of him. He's writing to a group of people. So what you normally do when you read an epistle is you color every reference to the author in one color and every reference to the recipients of that letter in another color. When you do this, what you're looking at and you're concentrating on is okay, what do I learn about the author. What do I learn about the recipients? So what I do is I have a color-code. All right and I got it out of the new Inductive Study Bible. That's a Bible that tells you how to study every book of the Bible inductively, on your own. Inductively means that you miss the middleman and you go straight to the Word of God to discover truth for yourself. You say, I can't do that. I ain't educated. I want to tell you something. Education has nothing to do with it, absolutely nothing to do with it. In fact, sometimes our education can get in the way because we think we're so smart. So education has nothing to do with it. It's simply; do you

really want to know for yourself what God says? God desires for you to know Him and He will open the Word of God to you if you will just study, if you will just discipline yourself to get in this Book, God will reveal Himself to you. And this is a method that He uses. It's just a method. So what I do is, I color every reference to the author in blue and every reference to the recipients in orange. Romans, chapter 1, verse 1, "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God." We marked the word "gospel." And this is one that you want to mark. So what do you learn? This is Paul and he is a bondservant of Jesus Christ. That means that he is a love-slave of Jesus Christ. He has discovered who Jesus Christ is. He has bowed the knee. And he says, "I am yours and you can do anything you want with me." That's how committed Paul was. He's also an apostle. An apostle was a person that was sent by somebody important or by somebody that wanted to deliver a message and that apostle was the one that was sent from the messenger to deliver the message to the recipients. And so that's what he is. He's an apostle. All right? And he's an apostle and he's set apart for the gospel of God. In other words he has one purpose in life and that purpose is to get that gospel to get that good news to everybody that he can. Why, why? Because it's the gospel that absolutely transforms us. It's the gospel that can change our society. It's the gospel that can shake up this world and cause people to come to their senses and wake up and see, hey, you don't have to live this way. You don't have to live this way. You don't have to live the way the rest of the world is living. You can live in the grace of God, in that unmerited favor of God, no matter what kind of a pit you've come from and you can have peace, you can have the peace of God in your heart. So Paul is writing to them and he's speaking to you at the same time. And what does he want them and you to know? In verse 8, he says, "First I thank my God" So what are you going to mark? You're going to mark the pronoun I. Why? Because it's obviously the person that's writing the

letter. And the person that's writing the letter is Paul. So you simply color it. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all."

PART TWO

Now we're not going to mark, at this point, we're not going to mark the recipients, okay, because of time. But he says, "... I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all ...," If you were marking that, you would color it orange. "... because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world." In other words, whoa, whoa! Rome was known for its debauchery. I mean, Rome was in such deep deep sin and iniquity. Women remembered what year it was by the husband that they were married to. So he says, I thank God because of your faith that's being proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness how unceasingly I make mention of you ...," He says, "... always in my prayers, making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I ...," that's right, color it blue, may succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, in order that I and you color it again, "... may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established." Now why does Paul want to see them? Why does Paul want to come to them? He wants to come to them because he has something to share. Listen to me. Listen to me carefully. If you have Jesus Christ you have something to share you have a spiritual gift just like Paul has and Paul will talk about it later in Romans, chapter 12. But you have something to give to others. Now in a society where we just want to get, get, get, get, we've got to know that we've got something to give if we know Jesus and that something that we've got to give is powerful, absolutely powerful. You'll see that in just a minute. He says, "I long to see you in order that I might impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is that I may be encouraged together with you while among you each one of us by one another's faith, both yours and mine." What is he saying? He's saying it's so important for us to get

together. It's so important for us to be able to talk. It's so important for me to hear about you and you to hear about me. Why? Because when you get together with someone of a like passion, of a like mind, of a like purpose, then what you do is you find iron sharpening iron. You find yourself encouraged. And he says, that's why I want to come to you. So one of the reasons that he's writing this letter is to tell them, hey I want to come to you. And when I come to you this is what I want to do. And then he goes on to say, "And I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you ...," I mean it's been on my agenda. He says, "... but I've been prevented thus far." I've tried to get to you and I've tried to get to you and I've been stopped. He says, "In order ...," the reason I wanted to come was in order ...," that I ...," mark I again, "might obtain some fruit among you also." Now what on earth is he talking about? I want to obtain some fruit. Does he want to buy some apples? Do you want to buy some oranges, whatever Rome is selling in those days? No. He's talking about a fruit that comes from impacting a persons life and seeing that person changed, seeing that person grow, seeing that person find the answers to their problems and seeing them walk as more than a conqueror. That's the kind of fruit that he wants. He says, "Even as among the rest of the Gentiles." He says, I've been around this world, I've been around this Roman Empire. He said, I've even been to Macedonia and you know what, when I got to that former Greek Empire, he said, lives were absolutely changed. I want to tell you something. If you will stick with me, if you will stick with me, if you'll make me a habit, your life will be changed. Not because of me, but because you and I are going to be face to face with the Word of God and it is alive and it is powerful. You read it and it comes in and it takes the covers off and it lets you see what you're like inside. And you know what? It never does it for any other purpose than to help you become everything that you ought to become. All right now, let's go back to the text. And I want you to see, he says, "I am under obligation." So I want

you to mark the I. He's under obligation. It says in the King James Version which is another translation of the Bible, I am a debtor and that's what it means. I owe you something. "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. He says, thus for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel ...," He says, "... to preach the gospel to you also who are ...," where? "... in Rome." All right, now let me tell you something. When you study the Bible and you're looking for the who, the what, the when, the where, the why and the how, you want to know where. So this is how you pick up where you are. And if you go back to verse 7, it says, "To all who are beloved of God in Rome." So you double underline it. Then you come back to verse 5, and he says, "I'm eager to preach the gospel to you who are ..." where, "... in Rome." So you double underline it. This helps you keep in context and see where you are. Now watch what you find out about Paul. He says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Now why is he saying to the Jew first and also to the Greek? Why does he say to the Greeks and the barbarians? Well, when you went back in time, the Jews would look at the whole world as Jews and Gentiles. If you weren't a Jew, you were a Gentile, even if you lived in the Middle East. If you weren't a Jew, you were a Gentile. All right, when you looked at Rome, Rome divided all the world as either citizens of Rome, which by the way Paul was, or strangers. They didn't belong to the Roman Empire. And it was coveted to be a citizen in the Roman Empire. But when you looked at the Greeks, the Greeks looked at everybody, I mean they were the intellectuals. They were the philosophers and they looked at the whole world as either Greeks or barbarians. In other words, if you weren't a Greek you were a barbarian. In other words, it would be like saying in the south, you're just a redneck. You know, that's all you are. So when God looks at us though, whether we're Greeks or barbarians, whether we're Jews or whether we're Gentiles, whether we're citizens or whether we're strangers, we're

important to God. And this was Paul's passion. Watch what you learn just from these verses. Look at verse 13, in verse 13, his last "I," where you mark that, he says, "... I want to obtain some fruit among you also." And then he goes on to say, "For I am under obligation. I'm a debtor." I want to obtain some fruit among you. I want to come to Rome because I want to see more people come to Christ and I want to help you reach more people for Jesus Christ. But also, I want you to know that I'm under obligation. It's like there is a burden on me. And that burden puts me in obligation to other people. He says, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish." And then he says, "I am eager...." Now listen, "I want to obtain some fruit. I'm under obligation. I am eager." In other words, listen, my engine is already revved up and, "I am eager to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome." I'm eager to bring this message so the message has to be more than just the fact that Jesus died. He was buried. He was raised from the dead. The message has to be that the death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ change your life. There's power in this message. And it's so powerful that it saves you and it guarantees you heaven.