

The Theme for the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

ROMANS

Romans 1:16 - 17

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;
as it is written,
"But the righteous man shall live by faith."*

Talbot School of Theology

TBE 517 Hermeneutics and Bible Study Methods

Instructor : G. Ted Martinez

Fall 1993

William Sumner

"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. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

Martin Luther,
The Works of Martin Luther, 1552,
(volume VI, pages 447-462, Muhlenberg Press.)
Commentary on Romans, 1515, "Preface" (Grand
Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976).

"I am in doubt whether it would be worth while to spend much time in speaking of the value of this Epistle. My uncertainty is due only to my fear that since my commendation of it falls far short of its grandeur my remarks may merely obscure the Epistle."

John Calvin,
The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and
to the Thessalonians, 1540, , "The Theme of the
Epistle of Paul to the Romans", (Grand Rapids:
Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), page 5.

The Theme for the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 1:16-17

I. Interpretations. The intent of this paper is to provide a partial survey of various scholarly interpretations of Romans 1:16-17. After personal examination of the scriptures, the view which best reflects my own findings will be stated. The basis for this preferred interpretation shall be made upon my personal observations and applications of both general and specific principles furnished by Roy Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation , SP Publications, 1991. The following interpretations are presented in the order in which they were written.

A. The Gospel is a power which saves all who believe it, or, it is the (divine) Word which is powerful to rescue all who put their trust in it. The Gospel is the power of God in contradistinction to the power of man. The latter is the (supposed) ability by which he, according to his carnal opinion obtains salvation by his own strength, and performs the things which are of the flesh. This ability God, by the Cross of Christ has utterly declared null and void and He now gives us His own power by which the spiritual (the believer) is empowered unto salvation. (Martin Luther, Commentary on Romans, 1515, Zondervan Publishing House 1954. Reprinted by Kregal Publications 1976, Pages 39, 40.)

B. The Gospel is indeed offered to all for their salvation, but its power is not universally manifest. Our righteous depends on our faith. We are justified by faith through the mercy of God alone. (John Calvin, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians, 1540, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961, Pages 28, 29.)

C. The Gospel is an instrument in the hands of God, truly powerful in saving men. Faith is the organ of reception, as the acquiescence of the soul in the method of salvation proposed in the gospel, that it is the turning point in the destiny of every human being. (Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Grigg and Elliot 1835, pg. 37.)

D. The Gospel is not a truth among other truths. Rather, it sets a question mark against all truths. Faith can therefore be neither directly communicated nor directly apprehended. So new, so unheard of, so unexpected in this world is the power of God unto salvation, that it can appear among us, be received and understood by us as contradiction. (Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, Oxford University Press, 1960, pg. 35).

E. Paul's eagerness to evangelize sprang also from his estimate of the message, the gospel. The theme of the letter (Romans) is expressed in the phrase a righteousness from God is revealed. The subjective genitive (lit. of God) identifies this as a righteousness that God provides for people on the basis of and in response to faith in the gospel. (John A. Wittmer, Bible Knowledge Commentary, "Romans", New Testament Edition. Victor Books, 1983, Romans 1:16-17. *CD Word Library, Inc. Version 1.0* , Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989).

II. Preferred Interpretation.

Martin Luther clearly provides the most insight and most accurate interpretation. Luther states that the "power of God" is all scripture (divine Word) or the Gospel. The content of both are the same, Christ. All scripture reveals the glory of Christ. Luther also clarifies that faith is a gift from God through the Cross of Christ.

John A. Wittmer provides some insights through some detailed grammatical information. According to Wittmer, righteousness is of God. Wittmer states this is received on the basis of our response to the gospel. The central message of the gospel according to Paul is the cross, and Christ Crucified (1 Cor. 1:23).

Martin Luther's comments can be verified in both "Broad Context" of the New Testament and the "Immediate Context" of Paul's writings. Luther's approach to scripture, allowing scripture to interpret scripture provides statements which are defensible in the context of scripture. The great reformer has stated his beliefs clearly in *sola fide* (faith alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone).

The same cannot be said for Karl Barth's comments as compared to Martin Luther's clarity. None of Barth's comments which were quoted can be verified by scripture. Barth's comments seemed saturated with human reason and non-biblical terms.

Were these believers in Rome Jews or Gentiles in ethnic background? The answer is both. Aquila, for example, was a Jew (Acts 18:2), as were Andronicus, Junias, and Herodion, all three identified as Paul's relatives (Rom. 16:7, 11). According to Josephus and others a large Jewish colony lived in Rome (cf. Acts 28:17-28). But Rome was a Gentile city, the capital of a Gentile empire in which all Jews, believing and unbelieving, formed a small minority. In addition, though Paul never failed to witness and to minister to Jews, his calling from God was to be "the apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13; cf. 15:16). So it is reasonable to conclude that his readers were mostly Gentile in background.

This conclusion is supported by evidence in the letter. Paul addressed Jews directly (2:17), and he included Jewish Christians with himself when he spoke of "Abraham, our forefather" (4:1, 12). On the other hand Paul directly said, "I am talking to you Gentiles" (11:13). Several additional passages indicate that Gentile Christians made up a segment of his readers (11:17-31; 15:14-16). In fact the implication from 1:5, 13 is that Paul considered the Christian community in Rome predominantly Gentile.

Since the Apostle Paul had not yet visited Rome¹, how had the Christian faith been introduced to the city? Apparently no other apostle had yet reached Rome, in the light of Paul's stated purpose to be a pioneer missionary and to open virgin territory to the gospel (15:20). In particular, it is evident that Peter was not in Rome at that time because Paul expressed no greetings to him, a grievous error if Peter indeed were there.

Perhaps a partial answer to the founding of the church at Rome is the fact that "visitors from Rome" (Acts 2:10) were in the crowd that witnessed the miracle of Pentecost and heard Peter's sermon. Some of them probably were among the 3,000 converts that day and returned to Rome as believers in Jesus Christ to propagate their faith. Other believers migrated to Rome through the years since Pentecost, for Rome was a magnet that drew people from all over the empire for business and other reasons. Aquila and Priscilla are good examples. They had lived in Italy before (Acts 18:2), and undoubtedly returned as soon as circumstances permitted. Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2), apparently the courier of this letter, is another example. She did not go to Rome primarily to deliver Paul's letter; she delivered Paul's letter because she was making a trip to Rome. In fact, Phoebe's planned trip to Rome was undoubtedly the specific occasion for Paul's writing this letter. Humanly speaking, Paul seized this opportunity to communicate with a group of Christians he was deeply interested in and planned to visit as soon as possible.²

¹ Robert Haldane, Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), page B.

² John A. Wittmer, Bible Knowledge Commentary, "Romans" (Weaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), *CDWord Library version 1.0*, Dallas Theological Seminary.

B. Broad Context.

1. New Testament Context

Christ refers to the "power of God" recorded in Matthew 22:29 and Mark 12:24 and states that the scriptures are the "power of God".

Romans 1:16
*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power of God** for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Matthew 22:29
*But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the **power of God**.*

Mark 12:24
*Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or **the power of God?***

Since all scripture is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16) by the Spirit of Truth who bears witness of Christ (John 15:26) and the Spirit's objective is to glorify Christ (John 16:14), clearly then, all scripture by design of the Spirit of Truth describes Christ and the angelic message of the gospel. On the road to Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, Christ makes this clear.

Luke 24:27
*And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning **Himself** in **all the Scriptures**.*

Luther's comment best accommodates what Christ said about scripture being the "power of God" and the reference Paul makes by declaring the Gospel to be the "power of God". Again, Luther comments "The Gospel is a power which saves all who believe it, or, it is the (divine) Word which is powerful to rescue all who put their trust in it.

2. Context of Paul's Writings

Paul is specific in 1 Corinthians 1:18 when he declares "*the word of the cross*" is the "*power of God*".

1 Corinthians 1:18

*For the **word of the cross** is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is **the power of God.***

In Romans 1:16, Paul establishes that the "*power of God*" is the "*gospel*". 1 Corinthians 1:23 states that the "*power of God*" is the "*word of the cross*". Therefore, the "*word of the cross*" is equal to the "*gospel*". Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 1:23 "*We preach Christ Crucified.*" 1 Corinthians 1:24 states that Christ is both "*power of God*" and the "*wisdom of God*".

1 Corinthians 1:23-24

*23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.***

By relating these verses, we can better understand how Luther said "The Gospel is the power of God in contradistinction to the power of man. The latter is the (supposed) ability by which he, according to his carnal opinion obtains salvation by his own strength, and performs the things which are of the flesh. This ability God, by the Cross of Christ has utterly declared null and void and He now gives us His own power by which the spiritual (the believer) is empowered unto salvation."

D. Immediate Context. In Romans 1:1-2, Paul clearly states that the gospel of God was promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

Romans 1:1-2

*1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He **promised beforehand** through His prophets in the holy **Scriptures,***

With verses 16-17, Paul brings the thanksgiving to its conclusion. But first Paul takes one further step; **because the content of the Gospel is God's Son¹**.

Romans 1:3-4

3 concerning **His Son**,
who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,
4 who was declared the **Son of God**
with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the
Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Gods way of providing salvation pertains from now on to all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike, and it involves fresh revelation of the righteousness of God on new terms.

Romans 1:16

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to
the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

D. Scripture interprets scripture. Paul uses the phrase translated "*ashamed of the gospel*" one time in all his writings. Furthermore, the NASB does not contain the phrase anywhere else. Paul does write a similar passage in 2 Timothy 1:8.

Conceptual parallel

Romans 1:16

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it
is the power of God for salvation to
everyone who believes, to the Jew first and
also to the Greek.*

2 Timothy 1:8

*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of
our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me
in suffering for the gospel according to the power
of God,*

Examination of the parallel scriptures would imply that "*testimony of our Lord*" is a conceptual reference to the "*gospel*".

¹ Paul W. Meyer, Harper's Bible Commentary, Romans 1:16-17, "Statement of a Theme" (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), *CDWord Library version 1.0*, Dallas Theological Seminary.

Another conceptual parallel exists in 1 Corinthians 1:18 when Paul declares "*the word of the cross*" is the "*power of God*".

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Verbal parallel

The word "*ashamed*" and the phrase "*power of God*" only appears in Roman 1:16 and 2 Timothy 1:8. Examination of the phrase "*power of God*" throughout the New Testament provides some interesting insights. Peter provides a strong verbal parallel in 1 Peter 1:5.

1 Peter 1:5

who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

E. One Meaning, Many possible Applications. Paul supported his point that righteousness is by faith,² Romans 1:17 by quoting Habakkuk 2:4.

Romans 1:17

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

Habakkuk 2:4

Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

Paul demonstrates one meaning, many possible applications when he quoted Habakkuk again in Galations 3:11.

Galations 3:11

Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."

²Roy Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation, 1991 (Wheaton, Illinois: SP Publications), page 262.

The entire text of Hebrews Chapter 11 makes this very point that Paul has made in Romans 1:17. Hebrews 11:39-40 specifically makes the point that all in the Old Testament who obtained salvation had gained approval through faith, not by their own perfection, but by the perfection of Christ.

Hebrews 11:39-40

*39 And all these,
having gained approval through their faith,
did not receive what was promised,
40 because God had provided
something better for us, so that apart from us
they should not be made perfect.*

The essence of faith consists in believing and receiving what God has revealed, and may be defined as that trust in the God of the Scriptures and on Jesus Christ whom He has sent, which receives him as Lord and Savior and impels to loving obedience and good works (John 1:12; James 2: 14-26). For salvation, faith is personal trust, apart from meritorious works, in the Lord Jesus Christ as delivered because of our justification (Rom.4:5, 23-25; 5:1). As used in prayer, faith is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (1 John 5:14 -15). As used in reference to unseen things of which Scripture speaks, faith gives substance to them so that we can act upon the conviction of their reality (Heb. 11:1-3).¹

¹ C. I Scofield, New Scofield Study Bible, NAS version, World Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1731, footnote 15.

F. Grammar.

Honorable mention should be given to John A. Wittmer's interpretation (item "E", section I) of Romans 1:16-17 provided in [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#). Wittmer presents great insight based on a more grammatical approach than Luther. Luther's comments hold up under examination of other scriptural references perhaps because it is his strongest method of interpretation, (scripture interprets scripture). Wittmer's grammatical comments, although detailed, provides light for the theme for Romans:

1:16. Paul's eagerness to evangelize sprang also from his estimate of his message, the gospel. (This is the fourth of five times Paul used the word "gospel" in these opening verses: vv. 1, 9, 15-17.) At least Paul gladly proclaimed it as God's panacea for mankind's spiritual need. He identified it as the infinite resources (*dynamis*, "spiritual ability") of God applied toward the goal of salvation in the life of everyone who believes regardless of racial background.

1:17. The theme of the letter is expressed in the phrase a righteousness from God is revealed. The subjective genitive (lit., "of God") identifies this as a **righteousness that God provides** for people on the basis of and in response to faith in the gospel (cf. 3:22). (Niv's by faith from first to last renders the Greek *ek pisteos eis pistis*, lit., "out of faith in reference to faith.") **Such a righteousness is totally unachievable by human efforts.** This righteousness is not God's personal attribute, however, since it comes "from God," it is consistent with His nature and standard. In response to faith this righteousness is imputed by God in justification and imparted progressively in regeneration and sanctification, culminating in glorification when standing and state become identical.

"Righteousness" and "justify," though seemingly unrelated in English, are related in Greek. "Righteousness" is *dikaioisune*, and "justify" is *dikaioo*.

Paul used the noun many times in his epistles, including 28 times in Romans (1:17; 3:21-22, 25-26; 4:3, 5-6, 9, 11, 13, 22; 5:17, 21; 6:13, 16, 18-20; 8:10; 9:30; 10:3-6 [twice in v. 3], 10; 14:17). And Paul used the Greek verb 15 times in Romans (2:13; 3:4, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30 [twice], 33).

To justify a person is to declare him forensically (legally)¹ righteous. "Declared righteous" is the way the NIV translates *dikaioo* in 2:13 and 3:20 and "freed" is NIV's rendering in 6:7.

¹ G. Schrenk, [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#), edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated and abridged in one volume by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), "righteous".

G. Word Studies. Words are listed in the order in which they appear in Romans 1:16-17.

The following studies were compiled from [The New Bible Dictionary](#), Edited by J.D. Douglas.

2nd. edition , Intervarsity Press, 1982. *CDWord version 1.0*, Dallas Theological Seminary.

1. Gospel (Gk. **εὐαγγέλιον**, *euangelion*, 'good news', Strong's # 2098g).

In classical literature the word designated the reward given for good tidings. That it is found more than 75 times in the NT indicates a distinctly Christian connotation. The gospel is the good news that God in Jesus Christ has fulfilled his promises to Israel, and that a way of salvation has been opened to all. The gospel is not to be set over against the OT as if God had changed his way of dealing with man, but is the fulfillment of OT promise (Mt. 11:2-5). Jesus himself saw in the prophecies of Isaiah a description of his own ministry (Lk. 4:16-21).

Mark defines the 'gospel of God' in 1:14 (av, following the Byzantine text, adds 'of the kingdom') as 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand'. To believe means salvation: to reject is damnation (Mk. 16:15-16). This same gospel is proclaimed by the first heralds of Christianity, but now the essential message is made more explicit by the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. While the gospel came with Jesus (the Christ-event is the gospel), it was anticipated in God's promise of blessing to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) and promised in prophetic Scripture (Rom. 1:2).

The gospel not only comes in power (1 Thes. 1:5) but is the power of God (Rom. 1:16). It reveals the righteousness of God and leads to salvation all who believe (Rom. 1:16-17). Paul regards the gospel as a sacred trust (1 Tim. 1:11). Thus he is under divine compulsion to proclaim it (1 Cor. 9:16), and requests prayer that he may carry out his task with boldness (Eph. 6:19), even though this involves opposition (1 Thes. 2:2) and affliction (2 Tim. 1:8). The gospel is 'the word of truth' (Eph. 1:13), but it is hidden to unbelieving men (2 Cor. 4:3-4) who demand supernatural verification or rational proof (1 Cor. 1:21-23). Even as it was by revelation that the full theological impact of the gospel came to Paul (Gal. 1:11-12), so also it is by the response of faith that the gospel comes with saving power (Heb. 4:2).

2. Salvation (Gk. **σωτηριαν**, *sol_te_ria*, Strong's # 4991g).

Paul claims that the Scriptures 'are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 3:15.) and provide the ingredients essential for the enjoyment of a full-orbed salvation. Enlarging and applying the OT concept of the righteousness of God, which itself had adumbrations of the saving righteousness of the NT, Paul shows how there is no salvation by means of the law, since it could only indicate the presence and excite the reactionary activity of sin and stop men's mouths in their guilt before God (Rom. 3:19; Gal. 2:16). Salvation is provided as the free gift of the righteous God acting in grace towards the undeserving sinner who, by the gift of faith, trusts in the righteousness of Christ who has redeemed him by his death and justified him by his resurrection. God, for Christ's sake, justifies the unmeriting sinner (i.e. reckons to him the perfect righteousness of Christ and regards him as if he had not sinned), forgives his sin, reconciles him to himself in and through Christ 'making peace by the blood of his cross' (2 Cor. 5:18; Rom. 5:11; Col. 1:20), adopts him into his family (Gal. 4:5f.; Eph.1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22), giving him the seal, earnest, and firstfruits of his Spirit in his heart, and so making him a new creation. By the same Spirit the subsequent resources of salvation enable him to walk in newness of life, mortifying the deeds of the body increasingly (Rom. 8:13) until ultimately he is conformed to Christ (Rom. 8:29) and his salvation is consummated in glory (Phil. 3:21).

3. Righteousness (Gk. **δικαιοσύνη**, *dikaïosune*, Strong's # 1343g).

The NT uses righteousness in the sense of conformity to the demands and obligations of the will of God, the so-called 'righteousness of the law' (Gal. 3:21; Phil. 3:6, 9; cf. Tit. 3:5). Human attainment of righteousness is at points relatively positively viewed (Lk. 1:6; 2:25; Mt. 5:20), but in the end this attainment in all men falls far short of a true conformity to the divine will (Rom. 3:9-20; Lk. 18:9-14; Jn. 8:7). In contrast to this human unrighteousness stands the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17) which in consistency with OT understanding conveys the thought of God's active succor of man in the miracle of his grace.

This righteousness is proclaimed by Jesus as a gift to those who are granted the kingdom of God (Mt. 5:6). By faith in Jesus Christ and his work of atonement man, unrighteous sinner though he is, receives God's righteousness, i.e. he is given a true relationship with God which involves the forgiveness of all sin and a new moral standing with God in union with Christ 'the Righteous One' (Rom. 3:21-31; 4:1-25; 10:3; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). By dealing with all the consequences of man's sin and unrighteousness (both God ward and manward) in the cross, God at once maintains the moral order in which alone he can have fellowship with man and in grace delivers the needy (Rom. 3:26).

The gift of God's righteousness involves entry into the new realm of divine salvation, the gift of eternal life under the reign of God (Rom. 6:12-23; 2 Cor. 6:7, 14; Phil. 1:11; Eph. 4:24). Hence the extrinsic righteousness imputed through the cross finds inevitable expression in the intrinsic righteousness of a life which in a new way conforms to the will of God, even though the ultimate realization of this conformity must await the consummation of the kingdom (1 Jn. 3:2; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 13:12f.; 2 Pet. 3:11-13).

4. Faith, (Gk. **πίστεως**, *pisteos*, **πίστιν**, *pistis*, Strong's #4102g).

For Paul, faith is the typical Christian attitude. He does not share John's antipathy to the noun, but uses it more than twice as often as he uses the verb. It occurs in connection with some of his leading ideas. Thus in Rom. 1:16 he speaks of the gospel as 'the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith'. It means a great deal to Paul that Christianity is more than a system of good advice. It not only tells men what they ought to do, but gives them power to do it. Again and again Paul contrasts mere words with power, always with a view to emphasizing that the power of the Holy Spirit of God is seen in the lives of Christians. This power becomes available to a man only when he believes. There is no substitute for faith.

Much of Paul's controversial writing centers round the dispute with the Judaizers. These men insisted that it was not enough for Christians to be baptized. They must also be circumcised, and, being thus admitted to Judaism, endeavor to keep the whole of the Mosaic law. They made obedience to the law a necessary pre-condition of salvation, at least in the fullest sense of that term. Paul will have none of this. He insists that men can do nothing, nothing at all, to bring about their salvation. All has been done by Christ, and no man can add anything to the perfection of Christ's finished work. So it is that Paul insists that men are justified 'by faith' (Rom. 5:1). The doctrine of *justification by faith lies at the very heart of Paul's message. Whether with this terminology or not, he is always putting the idea forward. He vigorously combats any idea of the efficacy of good deeds. 'A man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ,' he writes to the Galatians and proceeds, 'even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not

by works of the law.' He adds resoundingly 'because by works of the law shall no one be justified' (Gal. 2:16). Clearly, for Paul, faith means the abandonment of all reliance on one's ability to merit salvation. It is a trustful acceptance of God's gift in Christ, a reliance on Christ, Christ alone, for all that salvation means.

Another outstanding feature of Pauline theology is the very large place the apostle gives to the work of the Holy Spirit. He thinks of all Christians as indwelt by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9, 14), and he connects this too with faith. Thus he writes to the Ephesians concerning Christ, 'you also, who have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance' (Eph. 1:13f.). Sealing represented the mark of ownership, a metaphor readily understood in an age when many could not read. The Spirit within believers is God's mark of ownership, and this mark is put on men only as they believe. The apostle goes on to speak of the Spirit as 'the guarantee of our inheritance'. Paul employs here a word which in the 1st century meant a down-payment, i.e. a payment which at one and the same time was part of the agreed price and the guarantee that the remainder would be forthcoming. Thus when a man believes he receives the Holy Spirit as part of the life in the age to come, and as an assurance that the remainder will infallibly follow.

Faith is clearly one of the most important concepts in the whole NT. Everywhere it is required and its importance insisted upon. Faith means abandoning all trust in one's own resources. Faith means casting oneself unreservedly on the mercy of God. Faith means laying hold on the promises of God in Christ, relying entirely on the finished work of Christ for salvation, and on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for daily strength. Faith implies complete reliance on God and full obedience to God.

IV. Application Statement.

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-9:

*8 For by grace you have been saved through faith;
and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*

Faith is the personal, tangible gift from God in the heart of every believer. It has been written "Faith is the conduit through which grace flows." Charles Hodge wrote that "faith is the organ of reception." Romans 1:16-17 is simple, yet so powerful. Paul's statement "justified by faith" (Rom. 3:28, 5:1, Gal 2:16, 3:24) is the core of the doctrine of grace. Again the centrality of the message is the cross and Jesus Christ.

Personally, I feel there is no higher expression a person can have than faith. An individual could recognize the existence of God, respect God, even obey within human limitations. The highest expression a person could ever feel is complete trust. Paul has taught me that this trust which I feel is indeed the tangible gift from God through the true gospel's operative power. This operative power is the same operative power which inspired the biblical authors and raised Christ from the dead. The fact that faith is the tangible proof of God working in my life is profound and makes one quite humble.

In January, our Christian Education Committee has decided to begin holding bible study sessions on Sunday mornings which are designed to provide a more enlightening examination of scripture. I will make every effort to contribute to the success of this of this class. Specifically, I will ask Chris Johnson if he would be interested in the class in Chapel next week.

The application of this passage does challenge me to continue my education at Talbot. Next semester I will increase my workload by taking on an additional 3 units. I will add a course in Theology to my schedule.

Romans 1:16-17 provides applications at all levels of my life. It contributes in the daily duties as well as long term commitments. It is with a renewed confidence in Christ that I look forward to what the Lord shall provide. In faith I shall face the challenges of every day.

Selected Bibliography.

- Barth, Karl. The Epistle to the Romans. Introduction: The Theme of the Epistle. Translated by Edwon C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Calvin, John. The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians. Translated by Ross Mackenzie. Calvin's commentaries, editors David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961.
- Douglas, J.D. editor. New Bible Dictionary. 2d ed. Leicester: Intervarsity, 1982.
- Haldane, Robert. Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958.
- Hodge, Charles. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Philadelphia: Grigg and Elliot, 1835.
- Luther, Martin. Luther's Preface. From The Works of Martin Luther, volume VI. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press. Reprinted in Commentary on Romans. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976.
- _____. Commentary on Romans. Romans One. Translated by J. Theodore Mueller. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976.
- Schrenk, G. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated and abridged in one volume by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Scofield, C. I. New Scofield Study Bible New American Standard. New Scofield Study System. Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1988.
- Wittmer, John A. "Romans" in Bible Knowledge Commentary. Edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. New Testament edition. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983.
- Zuck, Roy. Basic Interpretation. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1991.