

2011SERMON: ROMANS#1 THERE IS NO EXCUSE

Romans 1:1-17

Today we begin our fall sermon series on the Book of Romans.

For some of you that just didn't budge your pace maker,

But for others here you are saying: "It's about time."

The book of Romans has been called the constitution of Christianity.

It deals with the relevant questions of Christian living.

How do we put into practice the things of God that we have learned?

How do we stay on track riding the waves of God's grace and provision,

In the secular undertow of the world?

We will be dealing with sin, guilt, peer pressure, and political correctness?

Romans teaches each of us how to live a holy life not just a Holy moment or an Holy hour.

It reminded me of Frank Laubachs ministry when he said:

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for the day, teach men to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

One woman said it this way: "Give your husband a fish and you feed him for the day, teach him to fish and you get rid of him every weekend."

Christianity was planted in Rome probably

by those who had been at Pentecost in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:10).

The Apostle Paul's object in writing to the young Roman church was to focus them on the great doctrines of the gospel.

for both Jew and Gentile.

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. 6And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. Romans 1:5-6

We all know that most of the buildings that collapse

in earthquakes and in Hurricanes,

do so because of their bad foundation.

Either their foundations were too close to the river bed or the ocean,

Or their foundations weren't grounded deep enough in their earth.

The Apostle Paul saw the danger of weakness in the early Christians

And wrote.

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong--that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. Romans 1:11-12

If the bottom is falling out of your life,

Then examine the foundation!

I can't tell you 'how many time I get calls from people who

Are really troubled, and they say:

"Pastor Eldon, what does the Bible say about my situation?

Where can I find some help?"

These folks are moment or day Christians.

They borrow somebody else's knowledge from the Bible for their day.

And don't dig into it for their whole life or lifestyle.

Now don't get me wrong, that can be a beginning.
 But the best thing is for us to be rooted and ground in God's word ourselves.
 So we can open our own Bibles and find
 Gods direction and guidance.

Adolf Hitler, was influenced by reading Nietzsche's Book
 -- *The Genealogy of Morals* (III 14):
 Nietzsche explained his anti-democracy, anti-Christianity, anti-Judaism, anti-socialist and self-
 acclaimed Anti-Christ, that he was of the master race.
 From that Hitler's twisted and warped brain wrote the book
 Mein Kampf, which brought about a horrendous World War, and
 the Holocaust, where six million Jews exterminated.

Charles Darwin book, *The Origin of the Species*,
 Created a philosophy that man was not created in the image of God,
 But that by blind evolutionary force and
 an accident of nature, man has descended from the apes.
 People read that book and made a monkey of themselves,
 believing that they are an orphan of the apes.

Let's make sure we are reading the right book.
 Begin with the Bible.
 The book of Romans has changed the world dramatically and eternally.
 The Apostle Paul wrote:

16I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 17For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

We could take Buddha out of Buddhism and still have Buddhism.
 We could take Mohammed out of Islam and still have Islam.
 But we cannot take Jesus out of Christianity and still have Christianity.
 That's like taking
 Breath out of your lungs,
 Blue out of the sky,
 numbers out of mathematics.

Romans is the constitution of Christianity.
 It is what gives us our direction in Christian living.
 Because it helps us know what we want to be and where we want to go.
 But it's up to us, it's our choice.

In the story "Through the Looking Glass."
 Alice wasn't sure which way she should go, so she asked the Cheshire Cat for advice.
 "Would you tell me please which way I ought to go from here?"
 The cat responded, "That depends a good deal on where you want to go."
 Alice said: "I don't much care where—"
 The cat said: "Then it doesn't matter which way you go".
 Then Alice added. "So long as I get somewhere."

The cat said; “Oh you’re sure to do that if you only walk long enough.”

That is a picture of most church members today.
 But I’m asking you as a Christian today,
 Where do you want to go, and what do you want to be?
 One year from now?
 Five years from now?
 700 years from now?
 If you keep living the way you do!
 You will get there.

James 4:17 “It is sin to know what you ought to do and then not to do it.”

You know that is one verse of the Bible I never did like.

We are going to be held accountable for what we know.
 And for what we did or didn’t do about what we know.

That is exactly where Paul begins in vs 18:
 Paul starts by recognizing that we are all sinners.
 And God’s wrath is revealed against us all.
 And a lot of people in the world don’t want to believe that,

18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. Romans 1:18-19

You and I are without excuse for not living right.
 We can’t come whining to God about not
 having enough information or direction.

20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:20

What is more sad is that even when we knew about God.,
 And his righteousness,
 We turned our back on him,

21For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Romans 1:21

Note the consequence of that.
 Our thinking becomes distorted,
 Our hearts become dark.
 If you don’t think that is going on in the world,
 Just ask the false teaches and preacher whose minds have been deceived.

In Acts 4 Peter and John are brought before
 the Chief Priest, Elders, and Scribes, and High Council.
 They imprisoned them, tried to shush them.
 When that didn’t quiet them, they beat them.
 Why did they do it when they saw,
 The miracles, the lame healed, the blind see, the sick raised up.

Apostle Paul quotes Psalms 2:1 “Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? Why did the kings take their stand, and the rulers gather against the Lord and against his Messiah?”

It is because they were self deceived,

22Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Romans 1:22

Even today’s modern man wants spirituality,
But not spiritual discipline.
Because we want to live like we want.
If we are our own god,
Then we can do whatever we please
And we can fulfill our desire without fear of judgment.

It’s Satan’s lie to Eve,
“You shall be as God.”
We live in a world of self deification
And self indulgences.
It is this sin that Paul mentions as vile and rampant in his day,
It has become vile and rampant in our own day.
They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.
They exchanged the truth of their humanity for a lie
Not just the men, but also the women.
Went against their very nature.
And because of Free will God permitted them to go on in their sins
And reap a sad consequence.

24Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. Romans 1:24

We have to be asleep or dead
Not to see this distortion in the world around us,
The unnatural has become normal.
Love is now lust,
Decency is now indecency,
Prudence is now the perversion.

26Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Romans 1:26-27

Now you would think that when people began to feel
The tragic consequences of their sins,
They would repent and seek God,
But just the opposite was true.
Because man was self deceived,
And given over by God

He sank deeper into darkness,
And he didn't even know it.

28Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done Romans 1:28

A depraved mind means a mind that cannot form right judgment.
In other words one that doesn't think clearly anymore.

The same has happened in many denominations and churches.
deceived thinking has become acceptable..

I have had leaders of churches says to me.

“Just because you don't agree,

At least have the decency to be quiet.”

What?

And then they say:

“If you can't be quiet and kind,

at least have the decency to be vague.”

And so many are to the death and destruction of our loved ones around us.

Paul warns us that “It must not be”.

Because it just leads us to more wickedness and deeper darkness,

29They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Romans 1:29

And God's heart is broken

As the depravity expands like the ever increasing wind in a hurricane.

But the worse is yet to come,

They not only committed these sins in open defiance of God,

But approved and encouraged others in their sin.

32Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. Romans 1:32

But friends don't despair.

SLIDE---God never gives up

His mercy is everlasting,

His spirit seeks to save the lost.

Until death come and forever seals our fate.

There will be a final bell.

When the game of life is over.

And Our fate is sealed for eternity.

There will be no turning back.

This is demonstrated by a young executive who was leaving the office late one evening when he found the CEO standing in front of a shredder with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Listen," said the CEO, "this is a very sensitive and important document here, and my secretary

has gone for the night. Can you make this thing work?"

"Certainly," said the young executive.

He turned the machine on, inserted the paper, and pressed the start button.

"Excellent, excellent!" said the CEO as his paper disappeared inside the machine. "I just need one copy."

Death is that shredder

Once we have passed through death door.

There is no return.

Judgment is before us.

God will give us up.

SLIDE---Is your heart ready to meet your maker?

If not surrender it today,

Confess your sin and receive Jesus

the beloved Son of God

Who gave his life that all who believe in him,

Shall not perish but have life everlasting.

Romans was written for us, here today in 2011,

That we can BE RIGHT with God, with ourselves, with others.