

Who are the Romans Now?
Romans 1:7a

I. One Small Step

A. Apollo 11 Moon Landing

1. July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong
2. 650 million viewers
3. “That’s one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.”

B. Cornerstone: One small step with the significance of a giant leap.

1. One small step closer to the massive revelation of the mind, heart, and purpose of God unveiled in Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome.
2. We have briefly explored the human author of this letter.
 - a. The conversion of Paul
 - b. The confession of Paul
 - c. The commitment of Paul
 - d. The context of Paul
 - e. The counsel of Paul
3. Today, we take one more small step toward the heart of this inspired word of God.
 - a. A few general facts about the letter
 - b. A general outline of the letter
 - c. A general consideration of the original recipients of the letter
 - (1) It is important that we take a look at the readers
 - (2) Romans is a “spiritual mirror.”
 - (a) When we look into this message from Paul to the Christians in Rome
 - (b) When we look with faith and eager expectation
 - (c) We find ourselves engaged in a letter written from God through Paul to us.
 - (d) **We are not merely reading and studying someone else’s mail.**
 - i) Romans is not a letter meant for others.
 - ii) **Romans is a letter meant for us**
 - a) Meant for us to understand
 - b) Meant for us to love and embrace
 - c) Meant for us own and live

II. Three Contexts for Romans

A. General Facts

1. Not “trivia” because nothing about the word of God is trivial!
2. Facts
 - a. There are 27 books in the New Testament; Paul wrote 13 of those books.
 - b. Romans,
 - (1) written about 57 or 58 AD
 - (2) #6 of 13

- (3) Follows Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians
- (4) Romans was probably written while Paul was in Corinth on his third missionary journey
- (5) Most of the 7 remaining letters are written while Paul is in prison

B. General Outline

1. Romans serves as a missionary support letter
 - a. **Romans 1:13-15 (ESV)** *I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*
 - b. **Romans 15:24 (ESV)** *I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.*
 - c. **Romans 15:28 (ESV)** *When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.*
 - d. Paul writes to the Romans
 - (1) While on mission in Corinth
 - (2) About a mission to Jerusalem
 - (3) To prepare them to participate in the mission to Spain
2. Outline
 - a. Paul introduces himself and what he holds in common with them as a fellow believer
 - b. Paul outlines the gospel he preaches in order to prove its orthodoxy and fill in any gaps in their understanding
 - (1) Paul is not the founder of the church in Rome
 - (2) The church in Rome was likely founded by Jewish believers who had been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and had returned home with the good news of Jesus
 - (a) The church in Rome likely was made up of both Jewish and Gentile (non-Jewish) believers
 - (b) **Romans 1:16 (ESV)** *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.*
 - (3) Paul provides a standard exposition of the gospel both to inform them as to build their confidence in him and his message
 - c. Paul justifies the communication of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles

- d. Paul calls for personal and congregational alignment with the spiritual and logical character of the gospel
 - (1) **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)** *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
 - (2) There are two types of theology
 - (a) Pure theology (the facts about God derived from God's self-revelation in the word)
 - (b) Applied theology (The facts about God transforming us in heart, mind, soul, and conduct)
- e. Paul invites the Christians in Rome to an ongoing role in the ministry to Spain
- f. Paul gets personal with family, friends, and acquaintances
- 3. The gospel in Romans
 - a. Jesus Christ and the good news about Jesus take center stage in the letter
 - b. The gospel is responsible for Paul's personal spiritual condition
 - c. The gospel is historically valid for ALL nations
 - d. The gospel is knowable, understandable, and applicable
 - e. The gospel deserves to be loved dearly, lived eagerly, communicated widely, and supported wholeheartedly

C. General Audience

- 1. **Romans 1:7a (ESV)** *To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:*
- 2. How will we see ourselves in these original readers?
 - a. "in Rome"
 - b. "loved by God"
 - c. "called to be saints"
- 3. Adjectives
 - a. "In Rome" not "of Rome"
 - (1) **John 17:16 (ESV)** *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*
 - (2) We live in the world but now, through Christ, the world no longer lives in us.
 - (3) We reside in the world but we do not belong to this world
 - (a) **Romans 1:6 (ESV)** *including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,*
 - (b) We belong to a different King and a different kingdom
 - (4) The letter to the Romans is not instruction in how to be Roman, it is instruction on how to be Christian while living

- in Rome, or in our case, Grand Marais.
- b. “Loved by God”
- (1) How do you know God loves you?
 - (a) Most who know it will cite experiences
 - (b) Some will point to the evidence of the Holy Spirit
 - (2) Romans
 - (a) **Romans 5:8 (ESV) *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***
 - i) The evidence that God points us to is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - ii) The greatest proof of God’s love for you is not your feelings but God’s actions
 - a) We are not called to faith in feelings
 - b) We are called to faith in truth
 - (b) **Romans 8:29-30 (ESV) *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.***
 - i) God decided
 - ii) God acted
 - iii) God accomplished
 - (c) That is how we know we are loved by God
- c. “Called to be saints”
- (1) Saints are not people approved by the pope and some ecclesiastical council.
 - (2) Saints are people approved by God: called, justified, glorified by God through faith in Christ
 - (3) Saints are those in whom, having been given faith in Christ, are filled with the Spirit and pursue a life of holiness and love according to the word of God for the glory of God.
 - (4) **Romans is written to assist the people of God in their loving, eager pursuit of God.**
- d. **Cornerstone, you in Grand Marais who are called to belong to Christ Jesus, who are loved by God and called to be saints, Romans is for you.**

III. What will you do with what you see in Romans?

A. Two opportunities

1. Put your faith in Jesus Christ
2. Get the gospel right and get the gospel out