

## 4. The Book of Romans 1:5

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*Paul's Epistle to the Romans*  
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier  
(1-25-23)

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We have begun a study in what many consider to be the greatest book in the Bible—the Book of Romans.

Paul gives us the theme of the book in the first sentence—**“The Gospel of God”**—or in other words, *‘What is the good news of God that allows a person be made right with Him and go to heaven?’*

Paul's introduction to Romans is the longest (by far) of any of his other epistles—an introduction he packs a lot of theology into—which we have been trying to ‘dig’ out.

### **Romans 1:1–7 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God <sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> and declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. <sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, <sup>6</sup> among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; <sup>7</sup> To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week, we got down to verse 5 where Paul tells us that, thru our relationship with Jesus Christ—we have received **‘grace and apostleship.’**

The Greek word for **‘apostle’** is *apostolos*—which literally means, *‘one who has been sent out with a commission.’*

But the word also carries with it the idea of being *‘authorized to act on behalf of another* (often on behalf of a king or governor).’ Of course, when a New Testament writer uses that language, they are talking about us fulfilling the Great Commission—

### **Mark 16:15–16 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

The Great Commission is all about Jesus, our King, sending us out into the world with the good news of God's pardon (redemption) thru His Son, and His invitation to be a part of His coming Kingdom.

Since all believers in Jesus have been commissioned by the Lord—all believers are *‘apostles’* in the sense that all believers in Christ have been sent into the world to proclaim the good news of God' salvation.

*“But who am I? I'm nobody. I'm not special—how could God use me?”*

That's exactly how Moses felt—

**Exodus 3:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, “Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

**Exodus 4:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> So the LORD said to him, “What *is* that in your hand?” He said, “A rod.”

In Moses' hand was the '*rod of a shepherd*'—which God used to deliver the children of Israel thru the Red Sea and shepherd them in the wilderness.

**What is in your hand?**

- In David's hand there was a *sling* that God used to bring down a giant.
- In Samson's hand there was *the jawbone of a donkey* which God used to destroy the Philistines.
- In the little boy's hand in the gospels there were *5 loaves and 2 fish* that Jesus multiplied to feed thousands.

So, let me ask you again—**what is in your hand?**

- Is it the brush of an artist
- Or the pen of a writer
- Is it the hammer of a carpenter
- Or the guitar of a musician?

*“I'm a young mom and it seems that lately, there is nothing but a diaper in my hand—how can God use that?”*

How about in the church nursery?—*“I want to do more for God than that.”* (“Don't despise the days of small things”; *“If you are faithful in what is little God will give you more.”*)

Whatever is in your hand, in whatever season of life you find yourself—offer it to God and He will use you in ways you never thought possible.

*“Yes, but I'm no Moses! He was very gifted; I can see why God used him!”*

Well, here's how Moses felt about *his* abilities for serving God—

**Exodus 4:10–12 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Then Moses said to the Lord, “O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue.” <sup>11</sup> So the Lord said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the Lord? <sup>12</sup> Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

When it comes to our 'abilities' (or the lack thereof) for serving The Lord—

### **1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NLT)**

<sup>26</sup> Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. <sup>27</sup> Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. <sup>28</sup> God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. <sup>29</sup> As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

### **2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him...

It’s not *ability* that God is looking for—**its availability**.

Any Christian who reports for duty by saying to the Lord as Isaiah did, “*Here I am Lord, send (use) me*”—will be used and equipped by God for the work He is calling them to do.

Last week, we ran out of time before we could focus on something Paul brings up almost in passing that we must not rush past—

### **Romans 1:5c (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for **obedience to the faith among all nations for His name...**

When Paul talks about ‘**obedience to the faith**’—he has in mind the same thing Jude did when he admonished believers to “*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*”

The faith is the truth that was revealed by God for the New Testament period which the Church is built upon and of which the gospel is primary.

Remember, Paul said this in the context of fulfilling the Great Commission by us going into the world and preaching the Gospel. However, the Bible is clear that receiving the good news involves turning away from the old life of sin and self (it’s called repentance), embracing, and living a new life in and for Christ.

Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica, commending them as to how their faith (salvation) had become a testimony and witness to all the people in their area—

### **1 Thessalonians 1:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup> For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols [repented] to serve the living and true God.

Then as Paul was sharing his testimony with King Agrippa, and how the Lord Jesus appeared to Paul and called him into the ministry—

### **Acts 26:16–20 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. <sup>17</sup> I will deliver

you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’<sup>19</sup> “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,<sup>20</sup> but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

The New Testament is clear that there can be no salvation without repentance—repentance is the prerequisite to believing the gospel for salvation—

**Mark 1:14–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

**Luke 24:46–47 (NKJV)**

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,<sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

There are many pastors that don’t believe repentance is necessary for salvation—they say a person only needs to *believe* in Jesus to be saved. I have even heard some of them say that telling people they must *repent* before they can believe and be saved—is to teach salvation by works!

Whenever someone says that to me—I simply direct them to the words of Jesus Himself on the subject—“*I tell you...unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*” (Luke 13:3)

The Greek word for **repentance** is *metanoia* which literally means—“*to have a change of mind*” about the direction of your life (you’re moving away from God and need to be moving toward God)—but a change of mind that ultimately leads to a change of direction or action.

➔ (Only the Holy Spirit can provide the power for us to change—but the desire has to come from us)

It’s important to note that repentance being preached by God’s servants as a prerequisite to people getting their lives right with God permeates the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments—let’s just look at some of the New Testament examples.

1. *‘Repent’ was the first word out of the mouth of John the Baptist (Matt.3:1-2)*
2. *‘Repent’ was the first word out of the mouth of Jesus (Matt.4:17)*
3. *‘Repent’ was the first word out of the Apostle’s mouths (Mark 6:7,12)*
4. *Repentance was an integral part of the Gospel that the Church was commissioned to preach to the world (Luke 24:46-47)*
5. *‘Repent’ was the first word of Peter’s invitation on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38)*
6. *Repentance was an essential part of Paul’s gospel presentation (Acts 26:19-20)*

**Repentance** is a word we don't hear too much anymore today in the church—it sounds archaic and out of step with the culture. So, in an effort to be hip, cool, relevant and politically correct many pastors have removed it from their preaching and teaching altogether—and as such, their favorite evangelistic verses have become—John 3:16 and Revelation 3:20.

**John 3:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**Revelation 3:20 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

In John 3:16, the Lord Jesus declares God's love for the human race—but isn't giving us a full gospel presentation to use to bring them to Jesus for salvation.

Those who try to use it as a 'standalone' gospel presentation neglect to mention (either thru ignorance or oversight) how Jesus preached *repentance* at other times as being *necessary* for salvation (as we just cited earlier).

As for Revelation 3:20—if you look before it, you'll see a space—and before that a period—and before that the word 'repent'—

**Revelation 3:19-20 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> ...Therefore be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

There can be no salvation without repentance—

**Luke 13:3, 5 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish...<sup>5</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

- *But where is that kind of preaching today?*
- It has been replaced by a modern, politically-correct gospel.

You see, it's not fashionable to preach a gospel that demands that people give up sins and worldly pursuits to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow after Jesus with all their hearts and lives—it's called 'commitment.

(Too many churchgoers only want to 'date' Jesus but never want to make a commitment to Him as in marriage)

- The gospel that we hear being preached today is, *"Come to Jesus and you'll be rich. Come to Jesus and He'll take away all the pain of life and make you happy."*
- The gospel being preached today is a cross-less gospel that tells people to simply believe some facts about Jesus and He'll give you heaven—and you don't have to worry about giving up anything (alcohol, drugs, sex outside of marriage...etc.)!

But that is *not* the Gospel that Jesus, or the Apostles preached because—that is not the true Gospel!

**How in the world did this essential element of The Gospel get excluded from modern preaching and evangelism?** —because you rarely ever hear a word about *repentance* anymore from pulpits, on Christian radio or in Christian books that are geared toward growth and fruit-bearing in the life of a believer in Christ.

Well, we need to go back to 1937, when Dr. Harry A. Ironside, a great man of God and Bible teacher, noted that the biblical doctrine of repentance was being systematically deleted from the gospel message by some who saw it as a work and therefore contrary to the gospel of grace Paul preached.

Let me quote from the book he wrote entitled, *Except Ye Repent*.

Ironside was a champion of repentance—he had this to say on the subject, *“The doctrine of repentance is the missing note in many otherwise orthodox and fundamentally sound circles today.”*

One well known pastor put it this way—

“This is not a new battle; this is an old battle being fought for the minds of a new generation. People today are preaching a gospel that says, *“Look, all you have to do is believe in Jesus, He’s standing at the door of your heart knocking, just open the door. Don’t worry about your sin, don’t worry about giving anything up—God will take care of that later...”*

*Shallow preaching that does not grapple with the terrible fact of man’s sinfulness and guilt, calling on all men everywhere to repent results in shallow conversions (or in fake conversions). And so we have myriads of glib-tongued professors today who give no evidence of regeneration whatsoever. Prating of salvation by grace, they manifest no grace in their lives. Loudly declaring they are justified by faith alone—they fail to remember that faith without works is dead...”*

**Titus 1:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him...

One well known pastor had this to say—

*“Some years ago, as I was riding with a professor who taught at a well-known evangelical seminary. We happened to pass an unusually large liquor store. When I made a comment about it, my companion said it was one of a large chain of liquor stores in the city owned by a man that went to his church and was a regular attendee of an adult Sunday school class. ‘As a matter of fact, he is in my discipleship group,’ my friend said; ‘I meet with him every week.’ ‘Doesn’t the kind of business he is in bother you?’ I asked. ‘Oh, yes,’ he said. ‘We talk about that frequently, but he feels that people who drink are going to buy their liquor somewhere and that it might as well be in his stores.’ Taken aback, I asked, ‘Is the rest of his life in order?’ He replied, ‘Well, he left his wife and is living with a young woman.’ ‘And he still comes to church and discipleship class every week?’ I asked in amazement. The professor sighed and said, ‘Yes, and you know, sometimes it’s hard for me to understand how a Christian can live like that.’ I said, ‘Have you ever considered that he may not be a Christian at all?’*

- *“How do I know if I’ve truly repented and am saved?”*
- There will be certain ‘fruits’ in your life that will bear witness to the genuineness of your repentance and faith.

**Matthew 3:1-2, 7-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”... <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance...

So true biblical repentance always involves change— i.e., ‘fruits’.

It is true that sometimes, for a Christian, change takes time, but true repentance desires it with all the heart and keeps seeking God for grace and strength to change—it isn't just lip service.

Theologian Erich Sauer, in *The Triumph of the Crucified*, speaks of true repentance as “a threefold action”—

- *First* of all, it involves awareness and understanding of our sin or wrongdoing.
- *Second*, it involves our emotions, we feel bad about what we have done.
- *Third*, it involves the appropriate actions that make for a change of lifestyle.

Although, recognition of personal wrongdoing is an important first step—by itself it is useless, even dangerous, because it tends to make a person think that mere recognition of sin along with a little remorse is all that's necessary—as if that's all that God is looking for.

While it is true that repentance will be accompanied by feelings of regret and remorse—they alone don't constitute true repentance. The main misconception that many harbor under concerning repentance is that they equate it only with *remorse* and *regret*—and not ultimately with change.

Remorse and regret are rooted in *feelings*—whereas true repentance is rooted in *actions* (turning from sinful behaviors to a life that is **obedient to the faith**—Romans 1:5)

Paul the Apostle addressed this very issue in 2 Corinthians 7 calling remorse or regret “*worldly sorrow*” if no change takes place—

#### **2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance [change]. For you were made sorry in a godly manner...<sup>10</sup> For godly sorrow produces repentance [change] *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Paul is saying that feelings of remorse or regret over your sins make you feel bad for what you have done—but in and of themselves don't lead a person to make any changes or provide restitution.

Paul said this kind of ‘sorrow’ is worldly and therefore cannot bring a person into salvation—it only leads to death (spiritual death—separation from God in hell).

➔ Unless a person is already saved...

That's the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow—godly sorrow is God-focused and worldly sorrow is self-focused. Look at the results that godly sorrow produced in the Corinthians—

#### **2 Corinthians 7:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!* In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

One pastor put it this way—

*“Simply feeling guilty over what I have done is not repentance. In essence I haven't even touched upon the sin itself, and Satan has effectively counterfeited the path that leads to repentance because it is so important to*

*walk with God. And it is possible for a Christian to remain in an attitude of regret and remorse for years and get nowhere in victory over sin—because God doesn't work through regret and remorse—He works through repentance."*

A.W. Tozer—

*"God will take nine steps toward us, but he will not take the tenth. He will incline us to repent, but he cannot do our repenting for us."*

Much of the Gospel being presented today holds forth a false hope to sinners.

- It tells them they can have eternal life while still basically living in rebellion against God and His will for their lives as He has revealed in the pages of His Holy Word.
- It promises salvation from hell but not necessarily freedom from sin.
- It offers redemption without repentance and;
- Heaven without holiness. (Hebrews 12:14)

But by separating faith from obedience—it leaves people with the impression that all they need to do to be saved is to intellectually believe some facts about Jesus Christ—and that's all it takes, and they're saved.

However, the Bible clearly teaches that Satan and his demons also believe those same facts about Jesus—yet they're not saved. (James 2:19)

Remember what Jesus said in John 10—

**John 10:27–28 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

*"It sounds like you're teaching salvation by works!"—NO! I'm teaching salvation *that* works.*

**James 2:14–26 (NLT)**

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? <sup>15</sup> Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, <sup>16</sup> and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? <sup>17</sup> So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. <sup>18</sup> Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." <sup>19</sup> You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. <sup>20</sup> How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup> Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. <sup>23</sup> And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup> So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. <sup>26</sup> Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

We're not saved by our good works for God—good works are the evidence of our saving faith.



**Titus 2:11–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His own special people, zealous for good works.* <sup>15</sup> Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

**Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

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