Lesson—The Power of the Gospel  Text: Romans 1:8-17

I. **Aim for Change/Learning Objectives**  
By the end of this lesson, we will…
1. **DISCERN** the power of God as illustrated in Paul’s faith,
2. **AFFIRM** the power of God’s salvation in family and friends, and
3. **PRAY** for the salvation of the world, believing it is possible.

**Key Verse**— “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16, KJV).

II. **People Places and Times**  
**Epistles**. Following the letter-writing customs of the day, epistles were written on sheets of papyrus with ink and a reed pen, then rolled or folded, and often sealed for privacy and authentication. The Christian community employed the members of their churches as carriers of the letters. Thus four people were usually involved in any New Testament letter: the writer, the secretary, the carrier, and the readers.

**Paul**. After his conversion (Acts 9:1-19), Paul embarked on three missionary journeys spreading the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Not only did the apostle personally establish countless churches throughout the world, he also wrote at least 13 epistles that make up a significant part of the New Testament.

III. **Background**  
In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul presents a deeply theological discussion of major Christian doctrine. The church was renowned for its faith and spiritual maturity (Romans 1:8). The apostle’s purpose was to establish the young church in the faith as deeply as possible.

The members of the church were primarily Gentile, with a Jewish minority. This may account for Paul’s reminder regarding Christianity’s Jewish roots and God’s unchanging plan for them (Romans 9-11). The letter to the Roman church plainly sets forth God’s plan for both the nation of Israel and the Gentiles.

IV. **The Lesson At-A-Glance**…  
1. Paul’s Prayer and Request(Romans 1:8–13)  
2. Paul’s Theme (vv. 14–17)
In Depth with More Light on the Text

Depth 1. Paul’s Prayer and Request (Romans 1:8–13) When Paul prayed for the Christians in Rome he prayed with two things on his mind. One was thanksgiving and the other was a request. Because of the city’s connections, believers throughout the Roman empire knew of the faith of the believers in Rome. Paul had never visited the church, but he, too, was aware of their great faith.

Paul’s request of God was simple: he desired to visit the Church in Rome (v. 10). He had never been to the city. He had made plans to come to Rome, but time and again his plans fell through (v. 13). In his prayers, Paul expressed his longing to visit the city to “impart some spiritual gift to you.” Paul desired that the Holy Spirit would use his gifts to bless the believers in Rome, and Paul expresses his belief that the Roman believers would also be a blessing to him (v. 12).

2. Paul’s Theme (vv. 14–17) Paul was aware of his Christian obligation to people regardless of ethnicity or beliefs. The same Jesus who died for him died for all. That is why he was so eager to preach the Gospel in Rome. The Gospel was the cause of Paul’s glory and he was honored to be able to proclaim it. Paul did proclaim the Gospel, and did so with full confidence in the ability (power) of this God-given message to bring salvation to all who would but believe (v. 16).

Paul simply states, “I am not ashamed of the gospel” (v. 16). Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel for two reasons: “for it is the power of God unto salvation” (v. 16). Whenever believers share the Gospel message with an unbeliever, they tap into the unlimited power of God. Paul is also not ashamed of the Gospel because through it “is the righteousness of God revealed” (v. 17). The righteousness that comes from God restores believers to a right relationship with God. Perfect righteousness is not the result of good deeds. Rather, it is a righteousness “that is by faith.” Faith is both a single act and a continuing attitude.

Liberating Lesson—see Sunday School book for additional comments

Application for Activation—see Sunday School book for additional comments

Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration?

1. Before Paul’s conversion, he was part of a murderous gang to persecutors, of note, God has a history of using murderers in the work of the Kingdom. Who are they...?

2. How have you changed from what / who you used to be?

3. One of Paul’s greatest desire for spreading the gospel was to go to Rome, where are you willing to go for the spread of the gospel?

4. What do you have (i.e. ‘power’) that could possibly change someone’s life?

Vocabulary-New Words

Notes: ________________________________________________________________
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