

042124

## The Gospel for All Seasons"

Romans 1:1; Acts 9:1-9

Shawn Reese



### Background

This week we begin a new series studying the letter to the Romans, what is sometimes called "The Everest of the New Testament." In this letter, we will find a detailed presentation of the Gospel, written by someone who was completely transformed by the Gospel. No matter where you are in life, this letter is for you. Indeed, this letter contains "The Gospel for all seasons." Join us this Sunday as we begin exploring this remarkable letter called Romans.

### Sermon Text: *Romans 1:1; Acts 9:1-9 (NIV)*

*Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—*

*Acts 9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?"*

*Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."*

## **Discussion Questions**

### **1. Preparation**

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

### **2. Sunday Questions:**

- Life in the 1st century Rome was described by Shawn as emphasizing on status, sabotaging and undermining others, surrounded by homelessness, and many dark sides. Yet Rome was the dwelling place of the rich and famous, the entrepreneurs, the politicians, the best artisans, and the great gladiators. How was life in Rome different and similar to our life today in Silicon Valley?
- Shawn said, "Romans is the Gospel for all seasons." What season describes your current life? Do you think Romans can help you?
- "Understanding Paul and his story will greatly affect how we read Roman or any of his letters... Before meeting Jesus, Paul's life could be described as the preparation of the perfect instrument for God's purposes...God gave him gifts, talents and experiences to prepare him for His purposes." What are the gifts, talents and experiences that God has given you, and how you might use them?
- "The Damascus Road event is so important it is repeated many times in Acts and in Paul's letters. It changed Paul, and changed the history of the world. It shapes everything we will read from Paul, and will help us in our study of Romans." What part of the Damascus Road story reveals Paul's understanding of the good news? Why is it also "the good news for us today?"
- From Shawn's clear description of each of the three aspects of Paul in Rom 1:1, "Paul a servant ('slave') of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle ('sent one') and set apart for the gospel of God ('God's plan for you')", how does each aspect of Paul's identifiers affect the way you respond to Jesus' call for you today?
- The book of Romans had great impact throughout the history of the church:
  - 1) St. Augustine was the "The Doctor of Grace."
  - 2) Martin Luther discovered God's grace.
  - 3) John Wesley said, "While [I heard Luther] describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed." He had been converted by God's grace.
  - 4) Karl Barth discovered the saving grace of God through Romans.Grace describes a gift which is absolutely free, unearned and undeserved. Grace means you can start over again. And in no person's life is that more relevant than in Paul's. God gave him a new start and made him the apostle of grace. Grace is the catalyst for everything he writes. Grace says it's not about us and our doing, it's all about God and God's doing. Our hope rests not on ourselves, but on God. We all have a "but God" moment in our lives, when grace broke through to us. Describe your "but God" moment.
- Romans will change your life and world view. What is your expectation of the Romans study on your journey?