

Romans, the Gospel of Belief.

Mr. God, this is Anna. Several years ago, I fell in love with a very special little girl named Anna. She was in a book by the title “Mr. God, this is Anna”. Some of you probably read it. Anna so understood God that it did not seem possible. She understood that there was a difference between religion and being righteous.

She explained it this way. “People can’t just talk about Mr. God from the outside, you have to know him from the inside”.

She saw God in everything. From the sun rise and sun set, to the bees gathering pollen and making honey. When it was explained to her that the bumble bee was too big for its small wings to let it fly, she became engrossed with that miracle of God and tried to figure out how many times those little wings would beat. She knew that God made the wind blow and that every time a breeze touched her on the face, that it was God himself touching her.

Anna was happy to be alive and grateful to be able to explore all of God’s wonders.

Now, let me introduce you to another girl, Alice, by letter, that has a different slant of where God is and her life.

Dear God, I seem to have lost you and can't figure out where to look for you. Like my car keys, I've misplaced you somewhere. I go to church and come away void of feeling. I go because I feel guilty when I don't.

At church, I shake hands with people—smile—then wonder if they feel the same way I do and or are they just going through the motions like I am? Sometimes I feel like I should quit coming---but I feel guilty when I don't. If I quit, at least I wouldn't be lying to myself.

Like a tire without air, my faith has gone flat.

Lord, you said that if I drank of the living water, I would never thirst again. Yet my mouth is so dry I can hardly form the words to speak.

The letter from Alice was written to the same God that Anna wrote to. The same God that Anna had found so much love and pleasure in knowing.

How tragic, her spiritual FIRE WAS DEAD. But worse, how sad it must be for God to see his people “playing church” and come only to fulfill their Sunday obligations.

What about salvation, eternal life and Jesus? What about all of that “stuff”? Does it seem so-for-away as to seem ridiculous?

Bret has just presented the book of James to us in a powerful way. A great book. And in it he talks about belief. So, I ask you, is there a difference between believing and believing?

We may all believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Well, big deal. Unless that belief is a belief that changes our lives, what good does that belief do???

Look at poor Nicodemus in John 3. He came to Jesus at night- “We know that you are the Son of God”. Hey Jesus, we believe. That’s why I came at night. To show you how much I believe. What good did it do for him to believe? Did he go back and defend Jesus in front of his peers? NO. He just allowed them to kill that same Jesus that he said he believed was the Son of God.

I wonder if Nicodemus heard what Jesus said in Matt: 10:32? “Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is I Heaven”.

So, I ask you, is Belief enough? We will find that there is a difference between head belief and heart belief.

Paul is going to go to work on our heart in this book. We need to be ready. There is a saying, that if “you get Romans, Romans will get you”.

In Romans 10: 9 & 10, Paul writes, “that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord—now listen—and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”. It is conditional. It is not just head belief, but heart belief. “for it is with you heart that you believe and are justified—and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved”.

I like the way the old KJV says it: “for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saithe, whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame”.

What Paul is saying and what we are going to learn reading and studying his writing, is that you have to have a deep burning belief that says that Jesus is MORE—That Jesus is alive—that He is our Lord and our lives have to show it. Righteousness cannot exist unless it begins with belief in the heart.

Do you ever think about the Cross? How lonely Jesus must have felt. Hey Peter, you were supposed to be the rock! where are you?

Where are the other? Only John and the women.

Even the Father turned his head. The pain, the aching head, the tearing flesh! Do we really understand what was happening on that Cross?

“The history’s long plan of redeeming man was finished. The work of Jesus was finished. The song had been song. The blood had been poured. The final sacrifice had been made. The sting of death had been removed. Satan had lost. It was over”

Acts 22. Paul’s meeting with Ananias. Let’s start in Acts 21, 37- 22, 21. What did Ananias say? “The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the righteous one and to hear words from his mouth. You

will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now, what are you waiting for, get up, be immersed and wash you sins away, calling on his name”.

Paul is going to tell us what he has seen and heard. Directly from our Lord Jesus.

It is my hope and belief that when we finish Romans, we will be able to hear Paul say: What are you waiting for, get up, be immersed and wash you sins away, calling on his name”!

## ROMANS: THE GOSPEL OF BELIEF.

K. C. Moser wrote a book entitled the “Gist of Romans”. It is a short book but full of insight. In it he wrote “Romans is necessary if we are going to really understand the scriptures. When Peter preached Christ and Him crucified, what did Peter say about the purpose of Christ’s death—nothing”.

“In Acts, we learn What was done in becoming a child of God, but in Romans, we learn the meaning of what was done.

To say it another way, “Romans is going to explain the sacrifice of Jesus. Acts told us what; but did not explain fully why. Paul does.

We will see that salvation is a gift based on the sacrifice of Christ. Conditions of salvation constitute man’s acceptance of this salvation.

Paul will teach us that Christianity makes sense. It is no arbitrary matter. The actual needs of the sinner have been supplied. Sin is real. Sin naturally results in guilt, and guilt results in condemnation. Condemned sinners can be saved only by an atonement on their behalf.

Based on the Cross, grace is possible and grace demands faith. What kind of faith? A believing faith. God saved sinners the only way possible, by allowing His Son be the atonement for us.

Paul’s outline of Christianity as revealed in Romans is as follows:

Sin, guilt, condemnation, atonement, grace, faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification. If there is no sin, there is no guilt and if no guilt, no condemnation and so on.

With this understanding, Paul will begin to lay out the foundations of Christianity for us.

Let's go to Romans, Chapter 1, vs 1-6