

**ROMANS SERIES THREE**  
**WORLD-RENOWNED FAITH**  
**Dr. Roger Barrier**  
**Romans 1:1-7**

•SLIDE #: *Romans 1:1, 7-8: Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, ... 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.*

The faith of the Romans was known all over the world.  
Unfortunately, the faith of some Christians is not even known next door.

Youth Specialties has come up with a unique plan to help Christians get on the ball and in sharing their faith in Christ. They are encouraging evangelism in a unique sort of way. I hope you enjoy this.

VIDEO: *Linebacker encouraging Christians to share their faith.*

•SLIDE #: **THE CHURCH IN ROME**

•SLIDE #: *Romans 1:7: To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

•SLIDE #: (Map of Mediterranean world) In the spring of 58 AD Paul was resting in Corinth after his third missionary journey.  
Paul's intentions included a trip down to Jerusalem to deliver gifts that he had collected for the needy church members there. Then a journey to Spain, Gaul, and even up into Britain where the Gospel had never been preached.  
But for this project he needed the backing of the Roman church. Since they did not know him, he wrote Romans to introduce himself and his message.

On the other hand, Paul may have sensed that his ministry was drawing to a close. He may well have written Romans as a final statement of the leading principles of the Christian faith which he wished to deposit with an established church for safe keeping.

Where did this church come from? How did it get started? One thing we can know is that Paul himself did not found it. He himself says in verse 13, although Paul had wanted to come to Rome many times, he was prevented from doing so.

Catholic tradition holds that the Roman church was founded by the apostle Peter. The evidence on that point is quite the other way. We know from the long list of names in the last chapter of Romans that Paul knew a great deal about the Roman church, even though he had not been there, yet nowhere in that chapter or elsewhere does he mention Peter, which is nearly inconceivable if Peter was in Rome or if he had founded the Roman church.

So how did the church become established? Acts two gives a list of the nations that were represented in Jerusalem on Pentecost, including, "visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism)". Most of these visitors returned to Rome and established the first churches in Italy there. The Roman church existed from the very earliest days of the Christian mission.

Went to Jerusalem. Was arrested. Spent two years in prison. Appealed case to Caesar and arrived in Rome

in early months of 61 AD. Prayer was answered. Finally go to Rome.  
Acts ends in the middle of the story with Paul in prison—awaiting trial. Did he get to Spain?

•**SLIDE #: THE FAITH KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.**

*Romans 1:8: First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.*

When the First Baptist Church of Rome came up in conversation the first thing folks thought of was faith!

If the world is not interested in churches today, it is simply because they have become famous for things other than faith.

We have churches which are famous for their architecture... stained glass windows... domes... bones buried in walls... organ... Easter cantatas... music, rich members,... Bingo... Pastor's sin ... singles' programs...

There are more churches famed for things than there are churches famed for faith!

•**SLIDE #: CONTENT OF FAITH: KERYGMA**

The emphasis is not upon their attribute of faith but rather upon the things believed. They were sound in doctrine and this was heralded throughout the entire Roman Empire.

Funeral of good man who did not go to church; liked commune with God. Called himself a Christian.

Significance is in what is believed

Not just I believe in God.

What he believed—or didn't—is also critical.

•**SLIDE #: James 2:18-19: You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.**

Demons believe in God – and they're not going to Heaven.

The early church *Kerygma* included five features (Acts 5:29-32; and 1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Notice how this message of faith flows.

•**SLIDE #**. During the *Crucifixion* God the Father placed all the sin for all time for all the world on the back of Jesus Christ. Hanging on the cross, experiencing a divine transaction, incomprehensible to mankind, He suffered the penalty for the sin of all mankind.

How do we know that His work of forgiving sin on the cross was successful? The proof is in the next two parts of the *Kerygma*.

The *Burial* of Christ (along with the spear thrust which pierced His pericardium) proved that He was actually dead. Without a three-day burial there was no ground for a resurrection.

The *Resurrection* speaks to the oldest cry of the human heart: "If a man dies, can he live again?" By His resurrection Jesus screamed out, "Yes! Of course! I guarantee that whoever believes in Me can also cheat death and live forever."

The *Appearances* validated the resurrection. The Gospels and Acts documented Christ's post-resurrection appearances to over 500 different individuals. We can trust their testimony.

Finally, the *Ascension* guaranteed that we were not left to live the Christian life alone. Jesus promised that after His ascension into Heaven He would send the Holy Spirit to indwell personally all of His followers all of the time. His life is the power we need to live out the life of Christ on earth.

Do you feel comfortable in understanding and applying the *Kerygma*?  
The *Kerygma* is your faith. The *Kerygma* is the faith we declare.

•SLIDE #: **TYPES OF FAITH**

•SLIDE #: **The Spiritual Gift of Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)**

This is a special spiritual gift. Often seen as gift of Vision – special God-given gift to be able to visualize what God is going to do and then not even be surprised when He does it.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7-9

STORY: Example of George Mueller – Orphanages. Never asked for a donation. Yet always had money for ministries – no milk – kids at table. Thank God for the milk – knock at door – “Milk wagon broken down. Soon spoil. Can you use it?” Mueller had supernatural understanding that the milk would be there.

•SLIDE #: **Saving Faith**

Paul and Silas in jail. Earthquake.

Acts 16:29-30: The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Acts 16:31: They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—and your household.”

There is a saving faith that brings is to eternal life.

Story told by English evangelist John Goth:

Saw two boys in London hospital. Cots side by side. One boy had fever and the other boy had been struck by a truck.

Fellow with fever was very weak. Boy who’d been struck by a truck said to him, “Say, I was down to the mission Sunday School and they told me about Jesus. And I believe that if you ask Jesus, He’ll help you. They said that if we believe in Him and pray to Him that when we die, He’ll come and take us to be with Him.”

Little boy with fevered brow said, “But what if I’m asleep when He comes and I can’t ask Him?”

The other fellow said, “Just hold up your hand. That’s what we did in Sunday School. I guess that Jesus sees it.”

Fevered boy was too weak to lift his hand so his little friend leaned over and propped up pillows and braced it under the fevered boy’s arm. So the little fellow with the fever fell asleep with his arm up. Nurse came in and the boy had died. His arm was still lifted on the pillow.

Now you know that the Lord saw his arm.

“Well,” you say, “that’s awful simple faith.” But Jesus said, “Except a man become as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven.”

The true test of a man’s salvation is not what he says but what he does.

True saving faith always changes a man’s life.

•SLIDE #: *James 2:14-17: What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you*

*says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

James put his point in a picture.

Brother or sister poor or naked or hungry; we say, "Don't worry. Get clothes on – you'll be fed." – but we do nothing – what good are our words? They're worthless!

Do words put food in an empty man's stomach? No! Do good wishes keep him warm? No! Does a profession of faith that makes no change in a man's life promise him a home in Heaven? No!

Not enough to have your name on a card or a church roll or baptismal register. If there is no fruit in your life then your testimony is false – Matthew 7:20 – "By their fruit you shall know them. Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in Heaven."

Christianity must be on the front page headlines of our lives.

When our Christianity gets out of the discussing on the editorial pages of our lives and into the front page – then people will know that our Christianity is for real.

God meant for Christianity to be headlined. It's good news.

#### •SLIDE #: MATURING FAITH

•SLIDE #: LUKE 17:3-4: *"If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." 5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*

Lord, that's tough! You mean we have to keep on forgiving him seven times? That's right! They said, "Lord, increase our love!" No! They said, "Lord, increase our faith!"

I marvel at that. Think, if I must forgive a man seven times in one day, then what I need is more love! They said, "Lord, increase our faith!"

You see, the whole of the Christian life is to be lived by faith, What we need is not more love. We need more faith!

Faith must mature. Faith grows with continually deepening experiences with God.

•SLIDE #: 2 Thessalonians 1:3: *"We ought to thank God for you...because your faith is growing more and more, and the love everyone of you has for each other is increasing."*

STORY: Brie struggles with God's provision. Prayed and asked for Car.

Lady at work, "We have an extra car, could you use an extra car? Not just any old car, it is a jaguar.

Little faith

•SLIDE #: Luke 12:27-28: *"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!"*

Mature Faith

•SLIDE #: John 14:12: *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."*

God is building faith.

STORY: Ken Gaub had a faith-building experience that is one of my all time favorites.

He was drained and discouraged. Exhausted in ministry and pastoring in Washington state. Took family for a get away time to think though the issues. Ready to quit. Driving in Dayton, OH when kids wanted pizza. Pulled off I-75 at place with several fast food restaurants. Told his wife to take the kids for pizza, he just wanted to stretch his legs and think. Headed over to Dairy Queen for soft serve cone.

Pay phone rang. No one answered it. 15, 20 rings. He walked over and answered it. "Hello." I have a long distance call for Ken Gaub." This can't be. Must be a mistake. "is Ken Gaub there or not?" Is this a joke? "I am Ken Gaub."

"That's him, operator," said a woman's voice on the line. "I recognize his voice."

"What can I do for you?" The woman began to weep. My name is Millie from Harrisburg, PA. I was about to kill myself. I sat down to write a suicide note when I remembered once seeing you on television. I knew if I could just talk to you everything would be all right. But it was impossible. Then some numbers came to mind and I wrote them down. I looked at the numbers and wondered if I had a miracle from God. What if this was your phone number?" So I dialed the operator and made a person to person call. Is this your office in California?"

"No. My office is in Washington. I am at a pay phone outside a Dairy Queen in Dayton, Ohio." He counseled the woman and hung up dazed. Should he stay in ministry? Seemed like he had his answer. Should he tell his wife? Who would believe this?

"Barb," he said when she climbed back in the bus, "You won't believe this. God knows where I am."

#### •SLIDE #: CONSPICUOUS FAITH

•SLIDE #: *Galatians 2:20-21: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Faith is a lifestyle that overflows into all we do.

All through high school, Alyssa tried to share her faith in Christ with her four closest friends. In long-late-night conversations they'd talk about everything from Heaven to the existence of evil in the world. After they graduated the four friends tried to stay in touch. Even though they attended different colleges, they e-mailed each other, got together at holidays and occasionally took summer vacations together. Sometimes they'd have conversations like the ones of old, with Alyssa talking about her beliefs and relationship with God.

While Alyssa's friends always treated her with respect, they never became Christians—and Alyssa was oh, so disappointed.

After college Alyssa accepted a new job in another state and soon lost touch with her friends.

She came back for Christmas one year and ran into one of her old friends at the department store.

Her friend was pushing a baby stroller and proudly announced her new baby to Alyssa.

When Alyssa discovered that her friend was not married, she thought, "*A lot of good all that talking about God did for her. She ended up getting pregnant before she got married.*"

Toward the end of the conversation, Alyssa asked if she could hold the baby. As her friend handed the little child to her, she said, "You know, Alyssa, you're partly to thank for this baby. If it weren't for you, I would have had an abortion. *But I kept remembering all we talked about and I couldn't do it.*"

Faith is the hallmark of our lives. It is the foundation for all we are and do. It spills over from our lives into the presence of people all around us.

•SLIDE #: **TRUST RESTS BEST IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST**

This will be a test of your faith in my word. Trust me.

1. I have something in my hand. How many of you believe me?
2. No one has ever seen it before. How many of you still believe me?
3. When I open my hand, you and I will be the first people to ever see it. How many of you still believe me?
4. After you and I have seen it, no one will ever see it again. How many of you still believe me?
5. Shell and eat the peanut.

What if I first showed you the peanut before I put it in my pocket? Would it have been easier for you to believe me? Of course, it would have.

What if Jesus told you He can give you life, pour the power into every situation in life, forgive your sins and promise you life after death? Rather large, exorbitant claims!

What if He proved it by the resurrection?

The resurrection is the peanut in my pocket.

He is showing us the peanut before He asks us to believe.