#### **Pastor Musings – November 30, 2020**

#### **Romans 1**

“For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.” Romans 1:16 (NLT)

**Big Idea**: The gospel is the power of salvation for everyone who believes.

One of my favorite books of the New Testament is Romans. I have to admit that I have become a great follower of Paul and find his writings both inspired and challenging. The verse that I just shared is one that has great meaning for each one of us today as we begin the new church year with the season of anticipation, Advent. Paul’s letter to the church at Rome is a letter, addressing a specific congregation with specific problems, but it is his most sweeping. It reaches from the pits of damnation to the heights of glory in the first eight chapters and unfolds the implications of that theology here on earth in the remaining eight chapters. Chapter one begins with the most basic claim: the gospel changes everything. The word *gospel* is simply an antiquated way of saying “good news.” It is not “good advice” for changing our life or a good secret that will unlock some hidden power. It is good news: something has happened, and that something begs to be announced.

The good news, Paul tells us at the beginning of the chapter, was promised in the past through the prophets, but is now revealed fully and clearly. Creation and our own conscience warn us that there is a Creator and makes us accountable for sinning against Him (the end of the chapter focuses on this point). But the good news is not something which we can discern from that. It is news which we have to hear and believe. What is that good news? That the Son of David has come and died in our place, and He has been raised again to be declared the powerful Son of God. This God-Man, human and divine, sacrifice and priest, has come and defeated our enemies of sin and death to give us peace.

It seems irrational, almost like a contradiction in terms. A King should kill, not be killed! The way to glory should be golden, not cruciform. That is why Paul needs to say that he is not ashamed of this good news: this precious announcement is the power for our deliverance. If we will recognize the King by acknowledging our sin and having faith in His work, we will be His subjects and His family. We will have forgiveness and life.

**Discussion Idea:**Why would God choose to bring salvation to us by faith in an announcement, rather than some list of deeds to perform? How is faith that Jesus is King the foundation of a changed heart?

**Prayer Focus:**If it were not for Jesus, what kinds of things would enslave you? Thank God for coming and destroying the old lords and bringing us a King that loved us enough to die for us.