



EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



From My Window

The Apostle Peter encourages believers to “always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pe. 3:15). This verse came to my mind as I read a short story by David McCullough about a painting that hangs in the White House — John S. Sargent’s portrait of Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Sargent had been waiting at the White House for several days for a convenient time to paint the president’s portrait, but to no avail. Finally, he met the president at the foot of the descending stairway, and asked, “Mr. President, when can I paint your picture?” Mr. Roosevelt replied, “Now!” Mr. Sargent seized the moment painting the famous picture of the president standing at the foot of the stairs. How about us? Are we prepared to seize the moment when anyone asks us about Christ? I pray so.



VBTS has been blessed by God with an outstanding and hard-working faculty and staff. Each member of the VBTS leadership team is committed to training the next generation of pastors and missionaries in the context of a local church. Thank you for your prayers this semester as we seek to sharpen the next generation for His Body.

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Truth for the Agora: *Paul's Portrait of God in Romans 1*

If I could recommend one chapter to fuel your worship of God today, it would be the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. You may have read this chapter hundreds of times in your Christian life. However, I encourage you to carefully read through it at your next opportunity and trace the incredible portrait that Paul paints of our great God. At least 26 times God is mentioned in this chapter by name or by personal pronoun. He clearly dominates Paul's thinking, and I think that Paul is seeking to get his readers to consider Him so that He may be worshipped for who He is. Since space is limited, let's review ten of Paul's statements about God and observe what is on his heart.

1:1 "*the gospel of God.*" The letter begins by revealing God to be the single source of the good news of man's salvation, which Paul will develop in the following chapters.

1:2 "*He promised beforehand, through His prophets in the holy Scriptures.*" God's announcement of His good news can be traced back to OT prophecy. Moo writes, "The God of whom Paul speaks is none other than the God who has spoken and acted in Israel's history" (p. 550)

1:3-4 "*concerning His Son . . . Jesus Christ our Lord.*" The content of the good news is His Son, Jesus who was marked at His resurrection with the title: The-Son-of-God-in-power.

1:7a "*those in Rome who are loved by God and called saints.*" What a sweet thought to consider: God loves all His people and calls me to be His 'holy one.'

1:7b "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father.*" In addition to loving us, he calls God by the most intimate of family names: our father. As our good father, the Christian family receives from Him the overflowing blessings of grace and peace.

1:10 "*somehow by God's will I may now [come].*" Just as God has ordained the good news to bring us salvation, He also has a specific plan for each family member.

1:16 "*for it [the gospel] is the power of God for salvation.*" There is divine power resident in the gospel message to rescue people of faith from sin and judgment.

1:17 "*For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith.*" The amazing fact of salvation is that God bestows his righteousness on people of faith.

1:18 "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.*" God will not tolerate sin.

1:32 "*they know God's righteous decree.*" God will judge with all rightness, and those who are judged will not be surprised by His eternal decree.

What we learn about God in these short statements is four necessary truths for our personal worship: He is *Redeemer* (the source of the gospel), *Father* (family overseer), *Creator* (designer of all things), and righteous *Judge*. All of us, therefore, who have received this good news and claim God as our Father should be responding to Him in worship – for He is worthy of our praise. Paul also expects God's people to proclaim God's great name to those who have yet to recognize Him for who He is. In Paul's own words, "So that the nations might glorify God for his mercy" (15:9-11;16:25-27).