



“Open Church – Open Bible”

Min. Marossa Davis



Sunday Church School

March 7, 2021

“ Paul’s Desire to Visit Rome ”
Romans 1: 8-17

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“ Paul’s Desire to Visit Rome ”
Romans 1: 8-17 (KJV)

- v. 8 “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.
- v. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;
- v. 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.
- v. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;
- v. 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”

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Romans 1: 8-17 (KJV)

- v. 13 “Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.
 - v. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
 - v. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
 - v. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
- For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”**

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Has anyone ever tried to convince you of something that they really believed in? Maybe it was a product they thought you should try. They enjoyed it, so they wanted to share that joy with you. The positive experience with the product gave them confidence to share it with others.

In this week’s lesson, the Apostle Paul declares his unshakable confidence in the Gospel message. Paul was convinced that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is God’s answer for all humanity. He was ready to preach the Gospel in Rome!

In the first century, no place came close to Rome in terms of prestige, importance, or power. For years, the Apostle Paul traveled all over the Mediterranean world sharing the Gospel message. (At this time Paul was on his third missionary journey.) Paul now sought to bring the Gospel message to the empire’s capital.

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TODAY’S AIM

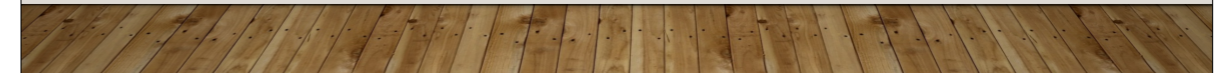
FACTS: to understand Paul’s great desire to visit Rome.

PRINCIPLE: to understand that the Gospel provides salvation to all people.

APPLICATION: to proclaim with confidence the good news of Jesus Christ.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. PRAYERS OFFERED - Romans 1: 8-10
- II. PLANS ANTICIPATED - Romans 1: 11-13
- III. PREACHING VALIDATED - Romans 1: 14-17



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I. PRAYERS OFFERED ROMANS 1: 8-10

As Paul opens the letter to the Roman saints, he identifies himself as an apostle and as a servant. While not one of the original Twelve, Paul was nevertheless called by Christ as an Apostle (I Cor. 15: 8-9), and he received his message by divine revelation (Gal. 1: 11-12). He also realized that his call was the result of God’s grace (v.15). That being so, he often referred to himself as a servant of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1).

The first thing that Paul gave thanks for was the very presence of a Church in the city of Rome. That such a strong congregation was located in the imperial city was not only remarkable but would prove strategic in the spread of the Gospel. Living in the shadow of Roman authority was a challenge to say the least. At this early stage of Christian history, followers of Christ were seen as a Jewish sect. As time went on believers were viewed as a threat to Rome and

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suffered intense persecution at the hands of the Roman government . But in spite of these challenges, the faith of the Roman saints was “ spoken of throughout the whole world” (v. 8). Considering the fact that Christ’s death and resurrection had only occurred only a bit over 25 years previous makes this even more remarkable.

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest- it’s all about sharing. Instead of each one reach one, each one can now reach 50! If you post a photo, video or comment, it may soon be seen around the world through a phenomenon known as ‘ going viral’. In Romans 8, we read that without the help of social media or even a modern postal system, news of these Roman believers and their faith had become a worldwide sensation. Apparently, truly good news- amazing phenomenal news- needs nothing more than old fashioned word of mouth to change the world.

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In addition to thanking God for the faith of the Roman believers, Paul also interceded on their behalf. Since he knew some of them personally, he could be very specific in his prayers. Even when we do not know people personally, we can still pray for them as Paul did frequently. **Calling on God as his witness** indicates that he actually spent time in prayer on their behalf. Similarly, if people request our prayers, or if we tell them we will be **praying** for them, we need to **follow through and actually do it**.

Paul petitioned the Lord about the possibility of a **visit to Rome**. This means that he gave forethought to **planning** his missionary endeavors while also recognizing that **God’s will** must be his first priority (James 4: 13-15). A balanced approach to decision making whether related to Christian service or to life in general, will include careful planning and decision making.

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As some of us have discovered, God may not answer our prayers in the way we expect. Paul would eventually make it to Rome, but not in the way he had expected. It would be several years before he arrived in the city, and that would happen as the result of a false accusation in Jerusalem, his subsequent arrest, several hearings, and his appeal to the emperor himself (Acts 21: 27-32; 25:1-12). Obviously, it was God’s will for Paul to travel to Rome, but he would not get there in comfort nor on his own schedule.

We should not make the mistake of concluding that everything that happens in the world is God’s will, unless by that we mean the permissive will of God. There are many reasons why bad things happen, and we do not want to be guilty of blaming God for things the devil is behind (Job 1-2) Even so, God can and does use evil to accomplish good (Romans 8:28), as we see in

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Paul’s journey to Rome. Even as an Apostle of Christ, Paul did not know what the future held in store for him.

II. PLANS ANTICIPATED ROMANS 1: 11-13

Later on in the lesson we learn that one of the reasons Paul wanted to travel to Rome was to secure their assistance in further missionary work in Spain (15: 23-24). Another reason was to ‘impart some spiritual gift to them (v. 11). Such gifts are usually understood as special endowments given by the Holy Spirit to believers (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-11; Eph: 4:11-12) Another possibility is that Paul was simply saying that he wanted to visit them for the purpose of **mutual encouragement and spiritual growth**. The Greek word for ‘established’ means made strong. Of course, these Roman believers were not weak, but they could be made stronger, as is true with all of us.

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Paul seemed to be saying that he and the believers in Rome could be **comforted together or mutually encouraged**, as they shared their faith with one another. Both the Apostle Paul and the Roman saints could be edified spiritually by his visit. All of us can and should **encourage one another** often. Discouragement is one of the greatest tools of Satan to weaken individual Christians and congregations.

Turning again to his planned visit, Paul did not want them to be uninformed. In fact, He had planned to visit previously but had been hindered from doing so. He was confident that he would see some good results from such a visit. As he had succeeded in **winning the lost** in other parts of the Gentile world, he believed that **with God’s help**, others could be **won to Christ** in Rome and beyond.

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III. PREACHING VALIDATED

ROMANS 1: 14-17

Knowing that the “ harvest truly is great” (Luke 10:2), Paul was committed to reaching all people everywhere with the message of salvation. He was even willing to make personal concessions to see this goal realized (I Cor 9: 19-23). As he had been rescued by the grace of God, he now wanted to preach this message to others. He therefore had a great sense of indebtedness to God and felt a personal obligation to share with others what he had himself received. He would not turn away from this call he had received from the Lord (Acts 26:19).

Paul wanted to reach all people for Christ, whatever their race, culture, social standing, or educational level. While some evangelistic endeavors have a distinct target audience, Paul’s goal was to reach **all the lost**.

In the typical congregation today, we tend to attract people like ourselves. While there is nothing wrong with that, most churches need to be **intentional** in trying to reach those who are different. After all, earthly distinctions have been removed in Christ (Gal. 3:28) , and those worshipping around God’s throne

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in heaven will come from “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9).

When Paul said he was “ready” to preach the Gospel in Rome, he meant that he was **eager** to do so. In spite of the many persecutions he had suffered as a Christian worker (II Cor. 11: 23-28), he had absolutely no reluctance in sharing the **good news** with any and all who would listen. Indeed, some did not want to listen, but he shared the message anyway (Acts 17: 1-9, 32-34). We should not take this to mean that Paul never had any fear or concerns regarding his evangelistic work (I Cor. 2:3). He nevertheless anticipated preaching the Gospel in Rome and beyond.

As a bold proclaimer of the riches of God’s grace, Paul was **unashamed** of both his message and his mission. If his message had been based on false testimony or fables, he would have been a false witness to God’s Word (I Cor. 15:15; II Cor 2:17, II Pet 1:16) and unworthy of his

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high calling (II Tim. 4: 1-5). But, because Paul knew the **Gospel was the true Word of God**, he would continue to preach it, even at great risk to himself.

Besides that , Paul knew that the Gospel was powerful and produced results. The word translated *power* in Romans 1:16 is the Greek word ***dunamis*** from which we get the words ‘dynamo and dynamite’ in English. The power of the Gospel can save sinners from God’s wrath and enable them to live holy lives.

The truth contained in the simple Gospel message- that Christ died for our sins and rose the third day (I Cor. 15: 1-4) - is sufficient to save the entire world. While preaching and hearing the Gospel is necessary, the power is only **released through faith**. In Scripture, believing is not merely accepting certain facts about Christ, although those facts are true. Sinners must be willing to turn from sin in **repentance** and trust Christ for salvation (Acts 2:38; 10:43). A life of obedience to Christ follows (Acts 16:30-33). The bottom line is **we are saved by grace through faith** (Eph: 2: 8; Titus 3:5).

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Paul realized that the Gospel must be preached to all people, “ to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). By ‘Greek’ Paul meant Gentiles, not just people who were from Greece. Preaching to Jews first was understandable as they were God’s chosen people with a privileged place in God’s plan (9:1-5;11:1-2) . Even Jesus focused on His own Jewish countrymen (Matt 15:24). Still, it is clear from The Great Commission- recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke- that the disciples were to take the Gospel to the whole world.

Practically speaking, Paul reached out to Jewish people first during his missionary journeys. Arriving in a city, he sought out the Jewish synagogue. There he would find people who believed in one God, accepted the Old Testament, and were awaiting the Messiah. Hence the synagogue became the beachhead for the Gospel. Only after his Jewish brethren largely rejected the message did Paul turn to the Gentiles who were often very receptive.

There are two main ways the word ‘ righteousness’ is used in Scripture.

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Sometimes it means moral uprightness and can refer to either God or man (Gen. 7:1; Ps. 129:4; James 5:16). It is also used to reflect that status of a relationship, that is, **being right with God**. “The righteousness of God in Romans is God’s saving activity directed towards sinners, who do not deserve it.” (Brown, *Romans*, Seminary Extension).

This righteousness is “ revealed from faith to faith ” as verse 17 tells us, meaning that it begins with faith and ends with faith. It is by faith from first to last (Hebrews 12:2). Or, perhaps it is “ referring to the advance from one degree of faith to another ”. (Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Eerdmans).

“The just shall live by faith” is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 and is a key verse in understanding Romans (Gal 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

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In conclusion, Paul’s love for Jesus was so infectious that he wanted to share it with everyone he could. Paul’s longing for fellowship is an example for us today. Do we yearn to be together, to worship together, to learn from each other? He understood that the ‘ Gospel of Christ’ is the power of God unto salvation”. The message of Christ’s death and resurrection possesses unique power, for those who believe it, whether Jews or Gentiles, receive eternal life.

The power of the Gospel to bring salvation to all people moved Paul to ministry. He longed to extend his ministry personally to those in Rome. Are we moved by the power of the Gospel to tell others about the Lord? We do not need to have confidence in our own abilities or persuasiveness. We need and should though have full confidence that the Gospel is God’s answer for all people.

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How confident are you in the Gospel message? Since the beginning, people have ridiculed the Gospel. Paul acknowledged that the preaching of the Cross sounded foolish to those who refused to believe (1 Cor.1:18). Little has changed since then. Likely, they would prefer a more sophisticated salvation based on their own good works.

Nevertheless, as Paul unapologetically proclaimed, God is pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached. (1 Cor. 1:21). Regardless of how people responded, Paul felt **obligated** to share the Gospel with everyone he met. He was **confident** in the Gospel message because he had **confidence** in the One who had given it to him to proclaim.

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Although most born again believers agree on the importance of sharing the Gospel, many of us would admit that we do not always feel **motivated** about it. We sometimes let our fears get the better of us. Often we feel inadequate in sharing our faith. The busyness of life can get in the way of spending time with lost people.

How can we get more motivated to share our faith? Prayerfully consider: pray specifically for the unsaved; mature Christians could give time to people who do not know Christ; invite someone to attend or watch a Bible Study or Church Service ; deliver food to someone in need; make yourself available to someone in a season of trial or difficulty; give materials, books, videos that stimulate spiritual interest; develop a clear method of sharing the Gospel. (What would you say?)

None of us can live perfect lives, do the people around us notice a consistent Christian life impacted by the grace of God. **Are we living Christian lives?** Have we been changed? Are we joyful, faithful and kind, showing love to others, being available to others? Do we avoid judgmental remarks? **As we live godly, gracious lives,** people will be more open to hearing about what the Lord has done for us.

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Practical Points

1. Strong faith is a gift from God and blesses the body of Christ (Romans 1.8).
2. God’s leaders ought to show concern for His people (vs. 9-10).
3. Christians should provide support and comfort for one another through the love of Christ (vs. 11-23).
4. We must be ready to share the Gospel regardless of circumstances (vs. 14-15).
5. We can boldly proclaim the Gospel of Christ through His power (v. 16).
6. The righteousness of God is revealed to us through faith in Him (v. 17).

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For Further Discussion

1. What made Paul unashamed of the Gospel?
2. Discuss ways to continue the work of the Lord despite personal hesitancy?
3. Discuss the benefits of fellowship with other believers.
4. What are some modern day challenges that may cause Christians to be ashamed of the Gospel? How do we overcome these?
5. Why is it important to boldly proclaim faith in God? How does this affect our faith?

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