

ADDRESSES ON ROMANS

by

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BEFORE we enter upon the study of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, let us take a glance at our chart, noting a few significant facts by way of introduction. Even a rapid reading of the book shows us that the key word is "*righteousness*," and that the key verses are these: "**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**" (1:16, 17).

The human author was Paul (1:1); and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he wrote this epistle from Corinth in the year 60 A.D. Although it is chronologically the sixth epistle to Gentile believers, yet the Holy Spirit has placed it first in the New Testament canon of the Scriptures—for a very significant reason, which is so important that a separate topic is devoted to it, as follows:

ROMANS—THE BASIS OF ALL CHURCH DOCTRINE

Paul's Epistle to the Romans sets forth the foundation truth for all church doctrine—justification by faith. It shows how a guilty sinner may become righteous before God by simple faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- In Ephesians we read how all those who are made righteous by faith in Christ, both Jew and Gentile, are gathered into the one Body, which is His church.
- In Colossians we dwell much upon the eternal glory and deity of the Lord Jesus, who is the Head of that Body.
- In Philippians we learn the blessed experience in the life of the believer when the Head and the Body are in perfect unison, when the Head controls the Body.

Thus it is that these four great epistles set forth church truth—all founded upon the great theme presented in Romans, justification by faith. Before there could be a church, Christ had to die for our sins "**according to the scriptures**," and rise again from the dead "**according to the scriptures**" (I Corinthians 15:3, 4). Before there could be a church, the guilty sinner had to be justified before a holy God.

Unless we grasp the meaning of Romans, we shall not be well-grounded in "**the faith once for all delivered unto the saints**" (Jude 3), ready to comprehend these other church truths.

Therefore, let us enter upon this study with the prayer that God will teach us by His Holy Spirit these fundamental principles of our Christian faith. To this end, may I ask every reader to be consistent in the reading of the epistle? First read it through at one sitting, not studying it analytically, but merely reading it as you would an article or a letter from a friend. Or, better still, imagine yourself a member of this church at Rome in the days of the great apostle, and read the book as if it were a letter from Paul to you.

Remember that many of the Roman Christians were slaves; others doubtless were Roman citizens, and enjoyed all the privileges of free men. Put yourself back into those days, and read it as a personal letter to you. By the time you have read it several times, you will come to realize why Martin Luther called it the chief book of the New Testament, and why tens of thousands of people came out of darkness as a result of the Protestant reformation, started by Luther, following his study of the book of Romans.

Luther's enemies claim that he severed his connection with the Roman Catholic Church in order to marry, for he was a priest. But this is not true, for he was not married until several years after he broke away from Romanism. It was Luther's study of the letter to the Romans that led to the Protestant Reformation.

THE THEME OF THE EPISTLE— “THE GOSPEL OF GOD” 1:1, 16, 17

Even the first careful reading of the epistle shows us plainly that the theme of this important document is: “**The gospel of God**” (1:1), which is the gift of God's righteousness, summed up in the key verses, Romans 1:16, 17.

The word “**gospel**” means “*good news*.” And it is the good news “**concerning**” God's “**Son Jesus Christ our Lord**” (1:3). The gospel is not confined to the book of Romans. Paul and the other New Testament writers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, unfold the theme in other books. But in Romans we have the foundation. The highest revelation which came from the pen of Paul is set forth in Ephesians and Colossians, but the content of these epistles will be closed to us until we understand Romans.

In what ways was this gospel “**promised afore**” as we read in Romans 1:2? It was by types and in sacrifices; and by the direct words of God's “**prophets in the holy scriptures**” (See Romans 1:2).

All Jewish believers looked forward to this gospel.

From Genesis 1:3 to Malachi the promises and predictions of the gospel are found. The Old Testament is the foundation for the teaching of the gospel. So, you see, it is a serious matter to reject the Old Testament.

The necessity for this gift is made known in Romans 3:23: “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**”

We have all come short of God's standard, but this standard must be reached before we can enjoy His presence; therefore, He offers the sinner the free gift of His righteousness.

“**The glory of God**” refers to what God is. We must be in perfect conformity to the glory of God, or miss it altogether. Moreover, the very best of us cannot reach this standard. It is not falling short of another man’s standard; it is falling short of God’s standard, what God is, as revealed in His attributes.

Have you read of the character of God? God is holy; He hates what is wrong. Holiness is an essential attribute of God; He bears no compromise with sin. If you have ever yielded to one single thought or act that is deceitful, you are sinful. If you have ever exaggerated or misrepresented facts the least bit, you are sinful. Everything God does is right. He hates wrong, and is Himself the Judge of what is wrong. So, you see, if you have committed one sin, you have fallen short of God’s standard. You have fallen short of “**the glory of God.**”

Again, God is true; He has never told a lie, never acted a lie, never thought a lie. And He hates everything that is not perfectly true.

God is good; His name is “Love”; and he delights in lovingkindness. You will remember how the Lord Jesus Christ summed up the law, saying:

“**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself**” (Luke 10:27).

If you have fallen short of God’s standard of holiness, goodness, truth, love—if you have fallen short of such attributes as these, my friend, you have forfeited your chance to stand before God on your own merit. And all human history is but the record of how man has “**sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**”

From Genesis to Malachi we have the account showing that man has ever failed. The purpose of God in testing man by the various dispensations was to prove to man his need of a Saviour. Man innocent failed. He failed under conscience, under human government, under promise, under law. God’s purpose was to try man in different ways, giving him chance after chance. And all ended in failure. These dispensations were for the purpose of preparing man for the righteousness of Christ, offered as a free gift when He became the Sin-Bearer on Calvary. And it is about this gift of God’s righteousness that we are able to study in the epistle before us.

In Romans 1:18-3:20 we have a court scene.

The Gentiles are first measured according to God’s standard and are found to be a total failure, as touching righteousness. Then the Jews are declared to be unrighteous, thus “**all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**” (Romans 3:23).

Then it is that the unfolding of God’s righteousness opens up before us, and the explanation follows of how guilty sinners may become righteous in the sight of a holy God.

My Christian friend, if you want to render a real service to people who are trusting in their own righteousness for salvation, then urge them to read the book of Romans and to study to find out what God says concerning the questions raised by Job centuries ago and sounded down through the ages: “**How can man be justified with God?**” (See Job 25:4).

The answer is fully given by the Holy Spirit through Paul in the letter to the Romans, wherein He shows that justification is by faith alone, by the grace of God in the gift of His righteousness.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE 1:1-17

THE FIRST seventeen verses of the first chapter are introductory. In the first fifteen verses Paul briefly presents three topics. He tells us:

- (1) Who he is;
- (2) Who Christ is;
- (3) Something regarding the church at Rome.

Then in verses 16 and 17 he states the theme of his letter, which we have touched on briefly.

I. WHAT PAUL SAYS OF HIMSELF (1:1)

(1) From "Saul" to "Paul."

Paul had two names: Saul of Tarsus, and Paul the Apostle. On the road to Damascus, as he was on his way to that city to persecute the Christians, God met him; and from this time on, he was a changed man. He ceased to be "**Saul**" and became "**Paul**."

Have you ever wondered why his name was changed? "**Saul**" was probably the name given to him by his parents. It means "*great*," and it is likely that they gave him this name because they hoped for him to become a great man. "**Paul**," however, means "*little*" or "*insignificant*." After he met the risen Lord, he lost his self-importance and became a humble servant of Christ.

This desire to be significant and to show forth the Lord's greatness followed him throughout his ministry. He was always hiding himself, becoming more and more insignificant, that his Lord might increase. You will remember that Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, saying,

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

And again, he wrote to the Colossians, saying that "**in all things**" Christ must have "**the preeminence**" because He is eternal God (Colossians 1:18).

There are probably many "Sauls" in the church-at-large today. But we should remember what John the Baptist also said of Christ: "**He must increase, but I must decrease**" (John 3:30). This experience becomes true in your life and mine when we accept Christ as our Saviour and seek first of all to exalt and magnify His name, as did Paul.

Let me give you a little story that illustrates this point: A man and his small son were walking down a street in New York, where a great skyscraper was being built. When the boy saw the men away up on top of the building, he said, "Daddy, what are those little children doing up on that building?"

The father replied, "They aren't children, my son; they're men."

“Then why do they look so small?” the child asked.

And again the father answered, “Because the higher up we go, the smaller we become.”

The boy thought awhile, then asked, “Well, daddy, if those men are Christians, they won’t be anything much when they get to heaven, will they?” And that is true. When we get to heaven, we shall see Christ as He is, and He will be “**all and in all.**”

(2) “*Paul, a Servant of Jesus Christ*”

Paul calls himself a bonds slave before he refers to his being an apostle. Here is true humility! I am afraid that, if we were introducing ourselves to an audience, we should name all the good things possible. But Paul says nothing of the fact that he was once a member of the great Sanhedrin. This would have had weight with the people at Rome, but Paul knew that the gospel did not need to be carried on the wings of the wicked Sanhedrin. This should be a lesson to us. His simple testimony is that he was a bonds slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is significant when we remember that Paul was writing to people who hated the thought of being slaves, people who loved power. The Romans despised servitude. Yet to them Paul called himself “**a servant.**” He realized that he had been “**bought with a price,**” and that he was not his own (See I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

The significance of this is seen further in that there are two Greek words meaning “*servant.*” For example, Caesar was a servant. Although he was the chief ruler of the world, yet he was at the same time an official servant. But the word Paul used to describe himself means “**bonds slave.**” That is the kind of servant Paul was, a “***bonds man of Jesus Christ.***”

Dr. John W. Ham tells the following story, which illustrates what Paul meant when he called himself a “bonds slave” of Christ:

“An African chief ordered a slave to be killed for a very small offense. An Englishman, overhearing the order, offered costly things to spare the poor man’s life. The chief answered, ‘I don’t want ivory or gold. I want no favors from the white man. All I want is blood.’

“The chief ordered one of his men to pull a bowstring and discharge an arrow at the poor slave’s heart. The Englishman threw himself in front of the man, and, holding up his arms, received the arrow into his own flesh. He pulled the arrow out; and handing it to the chief, said, ‘Here is blood; I give my blood for this poor slave; and I claim his life.’

“The chief turned the slave over to the white man, saying, ‘Yes, you have bought him with your own blood.’ In a moment the poor slave threw himself at the feet of his deliverer, and with tears flowing down his face, cried, ‘O white man, you have bought me with your blood; I will be your slave forever.’

“The Englishman could never make the slave take his freedom. He went with him everywhere. No task was too hard and no drudgery too burdensome to render his deliverer.”

That is how Paul became a bonds slave of Jesus Christ. He was “**bought with a price.**”

And we, too, can say that we are bondslaves of our crucified and risen Lord if we have accepted Him as our Saviour.

(3) Paul, the Apostle

Not only was Paul “**a servant of Jesus Christ**”; he was also “**called an apostle**.”

Now what is the meaning of the word “**apostle**”? Paul was not one of the twelve. Some say that Matthias was not chosen of God to take the place of Judas, that his selection was irregular (See Acts 1:15-26). They claim that Paul took the place of Judas, but this is not true. All through the New Testament the appointment of Matthias is recognized. In I Corinthians 15:5 we read that the risen Lord “**was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve**.” This includes Matthias, of course, since Paul did not know the Lord during His earthly life, death, and post-resurrection ministry to the disciples in Palestine.

What, then, is the difference between the apostleship of the twelve and that of Paul?

The twelve apostles are associated with Israel, and in the millennial reign of Christ they are to administer government over the twelve tribes. (See Matthew 19:28). But Paul is linked with the Gentile, and to him was given the knowledge of the “**mystery**” concerning the church.

In other words, to him was given the special revelation of God’s eternal purpose for the church, as the Body of Christ, known to Him from the beginning, but not hitherto revealed (See Ephesians 3:1-11). That is why he was chosen by the Spirit of God, rather than the twelve disciples, to write most of the great doctrinal epistles to the church. The twelve are linked with the earthly life and death of Christ, but Paul was chosen to write the epistles. The ministry of the Apostle to the Gentiles was different in character from that of the twelve.

One qualification of an apostle was that he had to see the Lord after He had risen from the dead (Acts 1:21-23); and Paul saw “**the Lord**,” even “**Jesus**” on the Damascus road (Acts 9:5).

(4) “Paul . . . Separated unto the Gospel of God”

Many people have strange ideas about separation.

They think that in order to live a separated life, one must not come in contact with others in the world, but must live a cloistered existence. Paul lived a separated life, yet he mingled with people everywhere he went. He did not live away from man. He worked as a tentmaker, earned his own living in that way, and showed how a person can live for the Lord and work with others too. You may be separated unto God and at the same time do housework. Every child of God should be “**separated**” just as Paul was.

On one occasion a pork-packer in Chicago, attending the business men’s class in D. L. Moody’s church, sat by a man whom he did not know. After the class was dismissed, the stranger turned to him and asked, “What is your business, sir?”

The packer replied, “I am a Christian.”

“I understand that, but what is your business; what do you do?” the stranger asked again.

“My main business is to be a Christian, but I pack pork on the side to earn a living. My business of first importance is to live a separated life for Christ.”

That man had the real idea of a life consecrated, set apart for the Lord Jesus. The separated man is the one who is busy in this world, but glorifies God in every turn of the wheel.

Paul was separated—unto what? **“Unto the gospel of God.”**

The word **“gospel”** is used sixty times in the New Testament. As we have already seen, it means *“good news,”* and makes known to us what God provides for us through Jesus Christ.

In verse 2 of our chapter Paul tells us that this gospel is not something new, but that it was promised of God **“afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.”** This reference of Paul is, of course, to the Old Testament, in which we find two clearly developed lines of thought:

- (1) The inherent sinfulness of man and his failure to attain righteousness;
- (2) The promise of a Redeemer who was to die, that sinful man might live before God.

For this gospel Paul suffered the loss of all things. Listen to his own words:

“What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count then but dung [refuse], that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:7, 8).

What has your testimony for the Lord Jesus cost you, my friend?

II. WHAT PAUL SAYS OF CHRIST, (1:3-5)

(1) God’s “Son Jesus Christ our Lord,” verse 3

Will you please notice the names and divine titles given to our Lord in this passage? As God’s Son, He is co-equal, co-existent, co-eternal with the Father, and with the Holy Spirit—the second Person in the Trinity. **“Jesus”** was His earthly name, while the title **“Christ”** connects Him with the entire Old Testament foreview of a coming Prophet. It is the Greek or New Testament name for **“Messiah.”** **“The Lord Jesus Christ”** is His full name, and **“Lord”** means **“Jehovah”**—God.

Many people refer to Christ only as **“Jesus”** or **“Master.”** The various cults refer to Him in this manner. “Modernists,” so-called, do the same; and so do many young Christians. When you constantly refer to Him only as **“Jesus,”** my Christian friend, you are showing that you are untaught in the Scriptures. **“Jesus”** is a beautiful name; it means **“Saviour”** (Matthew 1:21); and we love it. But it is the name of humiliation, the human name of our Lord. **“The Lord Jesus Christ”** is His correct title.

No man can call Jesus **“Lord”** or **“the Lord Jesus Christ”** except with the heart, by the Holy Spirit (See I Corinthians 12:3). That is why the cults never refer to Christ as “Lord.” Judas never said “Lord” to Him.

You remember at the Last Supper when Christ told the disciples that one of them would betray Him, eleven of them said, “**Lord, is it I?**” But Judas answered and said, “**Master, is it I?**” (Matthew 26:21-25).

Why did Judas call Him “Master” instead of “Lord”? Because he was not a child of God.

The cults refer to the Lord Jesus Christ as “our divine Master,” but the Christian gives Him His full title, the one given here by Paul in these opening words of his letter to the Romans.

(2) “*The Seed of David,*” verse 3

We read in verse 3 that God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, “**was made [born] of the seed of David according to the flesh.**” This puts before us the Incarnation, the all-important teaching that Jesus of Nazareth was “**God with us,**” “**God . . . manifest in the flesh**” (Matthew 1:23; I Timothy 3:16). And He chose to be born into the world through the House of David.

In Old Testament days, when the prophets spoke of His coming into the world, He was referred to as:

- (1) “**The seed of woman,**”
- (2) “**the seed of Abraham,**”
- (3) “**the seed of David.**”

The throne of David belongs to Him, and one day He will sit upon that throne as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, ruling over His people Israel, and through them, over the whole world.

I believe that this day is rapidly drawing nigh.

The re-establishment of Israel in their own land is a startling sign. Surely we are living in a day when “**the fig tree**” is beginning to bud! This One who gave us salvation, this One who is “**the seed of David,**” will reign as Lord of Lords over the house of Jacob forever.

(3) “*The Son of God,*” verse 4

The next thing we read about the Lord Jesus Christ is that He was “**declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**”

This does not mean that He became the Son of God, as deity, after His resurrection from the dead. This error is taught by various cults, such as Russellism. They say the Lord was just an ordinary human being while He was here on earth. They even have the boldness to turn to this fourth verse of the first chapter of Romans to prove their point, perverting its meaning. What the verse means is that, always the eternal Son of God, Christ was proven to be the Son of God, by the Holy Spirit, in His resurrection from the dead. In other words, His bodily resurrection proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that His claims to be eternal God were true.

Jesus Christ *always was* the Son of God. He claimed to be divine when He was here on earth. Certain people challenged Him on this claim. But He said, “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**”

And as He explained further, He was referring to “**the temple of his body**” (John 2:19-22). On the third day He rolled away the stone and came forth in resurrection glory. This is what Paul refers to in Romans 1:4.

(4) The Channel of All Blessing, verse 5

Now in verse 5 please note the words “**by whom.**”

Let me say that the Lord Jesus Christ is the channel through whom all your blessings come. Everything you have in life that is worthwhile and lovely is made possible through the channel of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of my favorite hymns begins with these words, “*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing.*”

Paul had received “**grace and apostleship**” by the Lord Jesus Christ. Apostleship is a peculiar gift possessed by only a few, but grace is offered freely to all men. Why was this grace bestowed? In verse 5 we have the answer; it was bestowed “**for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.**”

You see here the wide scope in the glad tidings. If one has accepted this message, he will be obedient to the faith of the risen Lord. This applies to all believers.

III. WHAT PAUL SAYS TO THE CHURCH AT ROME, (1:6-15)

In the verses which follow we read Paul’s greeting to the friends at Rome. And what a precious greeting it is! It is a wonderful testimony to those Christians at Rome, the city where Caesar was, where bloody Nero ruled, a sinful, wicked city.

Those people were living Christian lives under the shadow of Nero. It cost them something. If they could live for Christ in a place like Rome, should we not do the same in the land of the open Bible?

Paul did not know every one of the Christians in Rome, but he had a great interest in them, and he sent them a personal, loving salutation. Note how he addressed them. And what he said of them may be said of you and me.

(1) “Beloved of God,” verse 7

First he called them “**beloved of God.**” God loves everyone. We read in John 3:16 that God loves the whole world. But this love Paul speaks of, Christ’s love for His church is a filial love—as a father loves his son. This love is not the same as the love spoken of in John 3:16.

This love of Christ for His church should warm our hearts!

You hear of people who are undemonstrative, who do not show their affection. Many pride themselves on this reserve. But you have a God who is demonstrative. “**Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God**” (I John 3:1).

Do you know you are beloved of God? This is true of you if you are His child. And God would have you know it.

My friends, never allow sickness or sorrow to be used by the devil to such an extent that you doubt God's love for you. If you are ill on beds of pain and sickness, circumstances may seem to say that God does not love you. But regardless of circumstances, God does love you.

Once as I was going through a hospital in Chicago, I stopped at the bedside of a colored woman who was dying of tuberculosis. She had been in the hospital a long time. I spoke to her of the love of God. Then I asked her if she slept much, to which she replied: "No, I'm bothered with insomnia—I cannot sleep much, especially between the hours of twelve and four."

Then I asked her what she did during those waking hours, to which she replied: "I lie here and look up and think of the great God of the universe, and of how He loves me. I talk to him and He talks to me. The hours from twelve to four would be so long if I did not bathe myself in the love of God."

(2) *"Called Saints," verse 7*

These Roman believers were "**called to be saints.**" No man has ever become a saint except by being called. In fact, no man has ever come to Christ except by being called. His own words speak plainly: "**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you**" (John 15:16).

We are called saints. It is interesting to notice what the Word of God says about sainthood as compared with what certain branches of Christendom teach. Bible sainthood is not obtained by only a few; every believer is a saint. When you believe in Christ, you become a saint. But there are certain branches of Christendom which make a man a saint after he has been dead three hundred years. You can never be a saint after you are dead unless you become a saint this side of the grave.

As an illustration, let us remember the Corinthians.

Before Paul went to Corinth, the people there were extremely wicked. Yet Paul called those who accepted Christ as their Saviour saints. He had to take them to task for sin in their lives after their conversion, yet he called them saints.

When does a man become a saint? The moment he puts his trust in Jesus Christ, the Lord. Do not be afraid of the word "**saint.**" It refers to saved ones, God's blood-bought children.

I was visiting in a home in Chicago once, and was talking to a woman who belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, which canonizes men, makes saints of them after they have been dead three hundred years. She was speaking of Saint Anthony, Saint Martin, Saint Cecilia, Saint Dominic, Saint John and all the rest of them.

Then I asked her, "You know all of the saints, don't you?"

She replied, "Why yes, I do."

Again I asked, “Do you know Saint Louis?”

When she answered, “No, I believe I don’t,” I said, “I’m Saint Louis: I’m a saint.”

To this she said, “No, you aren’t a saint. You must be dead three hundred years before you can be a saint.”

And I read this passage in Romans to her, telling her that God canonizes a man when he accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour.

(3) Known for their Faith, verse 8

After addressing these Roman Christians in this way, *Paul thanks God for their faith*. What a difference there is in the testimony concerning those of the Church at Rome and the church of our own day! He does not commend them for their wealth or numbers, their refinement or culture. When we wish to commend a church, we often do so because of numbers or wealth or intelligence, but not so the Holy Spirit through Paul.

Once while I was in Chicago, a man pointed out a certain church to me saying, “That church is the most important one in the city.”

When I asked, “In what way?” he replied, “It has many millionaires in its membership. This church is very influential.”

I asked him, “How many people attend prayer meeting?”

Then he replied, “I believe we do not always have prayer meeting—at least, not in the summer time.”

I suppose that church thinks the devil takes a holiday during the summer months. Then I asked again, “Do you have people won to Christ in your church? Is there an invitation given for people to have an opportunity to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord?” And his answer was, “No.”

His way of estimating the influence of his church was by its wealth.

Paul did not estimate the power of a church thus, and neither must we. What God loves most in a church is faith. Faith brings things to pass. A church full of faith causes men to turn to Christ. The more I see of the work of God in crises, the more I realize that God cares most for faith in the hearts of believers. Does your church have faith?

(4) Prayed for by Paul, verse 9

The next thing Paul says to these Christians at Rome is this: “**Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.**”

My! but what a prayer life Paul had! And he had a prayer list. No wonder that church had faith which was spoken of throughout the whole world. Paul prayed for them. And he knew the meaning of prayer!

Do you pray for your church, my friend? If you want to be of service in your church, pray for your pastor. A group of praying people can turn a poor preacher into a power for God. But let that minister be surrounded by critics, and his heart will be broken.

While I was a student in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, I sat next to a young man who had once been a jockey. But he was in Bible school for earnest study. When we finished our course, this young man received two calls. One was to a poor little church in a run-down condition. While its minister preached, he could see the moon shining through a hole in the roof. And this church offered to pay my friend \$5.00 a week. The other call was to a church in Canada, offering to pay \$2,000 a year, with a manse furnished. This young man came to my room, asking for prayer, that he might know the will of God in the matter. I felt that the decision could be easily made. Why should he not take the place in Canada? But after a few days, he told me he was sure God wanted him to take the poorer church. He has stayed at this place for many years now and is still there.

Under his consecrated leadership, a building costing almost \$200,000 has been erected. He preaches to an audience of 1,200 people all the time, and hundreds of people have been won for Christ.

One day in recent years, as I was riding on an elevated train in Chicago with this man of God, I noticed that he kept looking at something in his hand. Finally I asked him what it was, and he showed me a calling card with five names written on it. Then he explained that every day he carried a calling card with the names of five of his members on it, so that throughout the day he could pray for them especially. Every day he had five different names on his card. When he told me this, I knew the secret of his wonderful success.

IV. PAUL'S DESIRE TO VISIT THE CHURCH IN ROME (1:10-15).

In verse 10 Paul made known his desire to visit the Christians at Rome. He wanted to visit them very much, but he wanted the Lord's will in the matter. Why did Paul want to see these saints? Verse 11 gives the answer.

He did not want to discuss worldly things with them, or have a cup of coffee. No; he wanted them to be established in the faith. I trust that this study of the Epistle to the Romans will result in our being established and more thoroughly grounded in the things of God.

Reading further, we see how truly humble Paul was. He wanted his visit in Rome to result in his being comforted, as well as in the Roman Christians being established in the faith. He realized that, in ministering to them, he himself would be blessed by their "**mutual faith.**" This is Christian fellowship, indeed.

In these brief, but meaningful words, Paul sent his greetings to the Church at Rome. He realized his debt of love to all men—to the Greek and to the man who did not speak the Greek language. This is the meaning of the word "**barbarian**"; no offense is implied here. But "**to the wise, and to the unwise**" Paul considered himself a "**debtor.**" And he was always "**ready to preach the gospel**" to never-dying souls, wherever God led him.

He was "**not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.**" Why should he be?

Yet there are people who bear the name of Christ, and yet are ashamed to testify for Him! But Paul knew the joy of witnessing to his Lord. He knew that **“the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to everyone 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.”**

We have already dwelt briefly upon the great theme of this epistle, as set forth in these verses; and we shall see its meaning more clearly in the unfolding of the message of the book, chapter by chapter.

This is **“the gospel of God,”** the gift of God’s righteousness, revealed to the world in the Person of His Son, our Saviour. Let us be much in prayer as we study together this wonderful portion of God’s wonderful Word, that the Holy Spirit may take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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