

**SBC – Aug. 13, 2023**  
**Romans 1:8-15 (NKJV)**  
**“Eager to Preach the Gospel”**

# 3

**Prayer:**

**Slide # 1**

**Romans**

**Theme:** The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

**Outline:**

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
  - God's holiness – man's sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
  - Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
  - Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

The first 17 verses constitute what we call the prologue (introduction) to the book of Romans. The theme of the book is “The Gospel of God” and in the very first verse Paul mentions the gospel of God to which he is set apart as an apostle. This sets the tone for what Paul really wants to talk about. For him it was all about the GOSPEL.

After introducing himself in relationship to the gospel; Paul then said this gospel concerns God’s Son Who is our Lord and WHO He is was proven in the resurrection.

Paul then emphasized that the goal of his apostleship was the obedience of faith among all Gentiles. There are two great truths brought out in the first 5 verses. There is the reality of the gospel involving WHO Jesus is as Lord-God; and then there is the necessity of responding to this truth in what Paul terms as “the obedience of faith”. People need to come to the knowledge of the truth and then they need to obediently, in their hearts, respond to it in faith.

Then in verse 7 Paul gave his formal salutation of Grace and Peace “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”. And that is where we pick up our study this morning. Paul now goes on in 1:8-15 to further introduce himself, his passion, his motives, and his reasons for wanting to visit Rome.

**Romans 1:8–15 (NKJV)**

**8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.**

Paul says, “First” but there is no “second” so it is thought that the sense is simply “to begin with”. The first thing Paul communicates to them is that he is thankful for them. That is always a good place to begin.

And Paul habitually does start there in all his letters. The only exception is the letter of Galatians and in that letter he is stern in confronting them for not holding faithfully to the gospel and the tone from the very beginning is that of most solemn concern.

Paul says, “***I thank my God through Jesus Christ***”. God is his personal God and this reality is in place through Jesus Christ. Both his relationship with God and his prayer are through Jesus.

This word “***through***” emphasizes the fact that Christ is our Mediator. He is the go-between. He is our means of connection with God. It’s only through Jesus that we have access to God in any fashion.

### **Slide # 2**

#### **John 14:6 (NKJV)**

**6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

#### **John 14:13 (NKJV)**

**13** And whatever you ask **in My name**, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

#### **1 Timothy 2:5 (NKJV)**

**5** For there is one God and **one Mediator** between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

This is why we pray in Jesus Name. We are acknowledging that it is only through Him that we have access to God. So Paul gave thanks to God THROUGH Jesus Christ.

Jesus means “God-Savior” and Christ means “Anointed One” in the sense of the special chosen One Who fulfills God’s promises.

And note he is thankful for ALL the people of faith in Rome. Now we will note later that not all believers in Rome were thankful for him, but he was thankful for all of them (Phil. 1:15-16).

As he speaks to them collectively, he is thankful that their testimony of faith was “***spoken of throughout the whole world.***” By the whole world it is thought that Paul meant the entire Roman world - that is the Roman Empire. Wherever Paul goes he hears about the Christians in Rome (cf. 1 Thess. 1:8). And Paul was thankful for this!

Whenever possible, the apostle began his letters by expressing appreciation for whatever was commendable in his readers. (A good example for all of us!) – **William MacDonald**

Paul consistently had a thankful heart as he focused on what God was doing in and through him and in and through the lives of all believers in the advancement of Christ's Church throughout the world.

**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,**

To show how serious Paul is in his prayer life for these believers he calls God as his witness. This is to say, "May God hold me accountable if I am not telling the truth."

God knows what no one else knows. God knows the intensity of our prayer life. And Paul appeals to God as his witness that he is constantly in prayer for these believers in Rome. They are continually on his prayer list.

Paul describes himself as serving God with his spirit in the gospel of His Son. Here we see the PASSION of Paul. It was all about the gospel!

A person's "passion" is what drives them – it is the motivating reality in their life. People have all kinds of things they term as their "passion". It might be physical fitness, politics, religion, community service, leisure, sports, job, money, education, food, fame, etc.

But for Paul it was THE GOSPEL! The gospel was his PASSION!

When Paul says he serves God with his spirit – the word "serve" (Gk. *latreuo*) in the NT is always used in the sense of "religious service". It literally means "**to serve as a priest**". It is sometimes translated as "**worship**" (Phil. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:3). This is the same word used in Romans 12:1 where Paul calls on believers to sell out to God as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God which he says is "**your spiritual service of worship**" as so rendered in the NASB.

For Paul his whole life was about serving God in spiritual service of worship and specifically this passionate service was "in the gospel" of God's Son. Paul is telling us that he did this with his whole heart.

Note “the gospel of God” in verse 1 and the “the gospel of His Son” in verse 9 are interchangeable. Gospel means “good news”. This is God’s good news and it is about His Son – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consistently the content of Paul’s prayers for his readers was spiritually oriented as we will see here as well (cf. 2 Thess. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:14-19; 6:18; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-11). Paul continually prayed in relation to the gospel – that people would get saved through the gospel; that they would grow in relation to the gospel; that God’s people would be sharing the gospel. We need more gospel praying! We pray about everything under the sun – but how much gospel praying really goes on?

### **Slide # 3**

#### ***Romans 1:9***

Serve with my spirit in the **gospel**...

Always in my **prayers**....

Paul consistently links the gospel and praying. In his mind they were very closely related.

**10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.**

This is an interesting verse because it brings in the “will of God”. People always want to know about the will of God. Well, to start with open your Bible. The revealed will of God is certainly there. You shall not kill, love your neighbor, be kind to one another, abstain from sexual immorality, and on and on. All that God has told us is the will of God.

But what about where He has not clearly told us. Paul indicates here there is an unknown “will of God” that is not yet revealed. He wants to come see these Roman Christians but he wants it to line up with God’s will and so he asks in prayer accordingly.

If you have a desire for something – pray about it. Pray that if it is God’s will it will come about. But the key is always submitting to God’s will whatever that may be. And often we don’t know for sure how God will lead.

### **Slide # 4**

**1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)**

**14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we **ask anything according to His will**, He hears us.

**15** And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

God works through prayer! Repeatedly we find Jesus emphasizing that God gives us spiritual fruit in answer to prayer.

**Slide # 5****John 15:16 (NKJV)**

**16** You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit**, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you **ask** the Father in My name He may give you.

Note Paul says, “making request”. We can ask. James says, “you do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2). God wants us to ask. He wants us to recognize our dependence upon Him.

Paul’s specific request was that “I may find a way” which is the idea of God removing the difficulties and making it possible.

Paul desires to come, but at the same time he wants it to be according to God’s will. Often, we don’t know God’s “secret will” until we look back on how He has led. And then we are amazed at how differently He worked it all out than what we had envisioned.

God did answer Paul’s prayer. He did eventually get to Rome. But note it involved delays. There was no instant answer. And it didn’t happen the way he might have expected. He ended up being a prisoner of the state and being escorted to Rome to face charges. And along the way he faced false accusers, life threatening situations, being physically abused, shipwreck, snake bite, and a prolonged delay. Yes, God got him there but not like expected. It didn’t happen exactly according to how Paul was praying, I am sure. God’s ways are not our ways! We read about the trajectory involved in Acts 21-28. It was quite a process.

Paul did not presume to impose his will on God, nor did he claim to know God’s “secret will”. Rather he simply made request to God and was in submission to God’s will – whatever that would involve. This is KEY!

In all our praying we want to have that attitude that says to God, “not My will, but Yours, be done” (Lk. 22:42).

Jesus is always the Lord! He is the Master Who is always out in front leading us. We are not in charge. We are just His servants!

“We make our plans but the outcome is in God’s hands.” We make our plans and pray, submitting to God’s will.

We work it out in the course of life. God did not say “No” so Paul kept praying. However, God did in effect say, “wait”. His timing is not our timing, His ways are not our ways.

### **Slide # 6**

#### ***Answered Prayer:***

No!

Yes!

Later!

Refined! (Rom. 8:27)

Note: As Paul went along God did eventually plainly reveal that he was going to make it to Rome.

### **Slide # 7**

#### **Acts 23:11 (NKJV)**

**11** But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so **you must also bear witness at Rome.**”

But at the point Paul was writing Romans he was not yet certain of the will of God concerning going to Rome although he had a passion to visit there (cf. Acts 19:21).

Sometimes people ask: “If God is going to sovereignly accomplish His plans anyway, what is the point in praying?” That is a great question involving a great mystery. On this score there are two parallel truths brought out in Scripture: 1) God is sovereign over all things and He will accomplish His will and purpose. 2) God works through prayer and prayer changes things. Exactly how to harmonize these truths is a mystery!

I believe both but freely admit there is mystery here! This is consistently the case involving God's sovereignty and human responsibility. We can leave the God side of things to God. It is safe there. But on the human responsibility side of things we are responsible. Let us be so when it comes to the scriptural injunction to pray. God sovereignly works but He often does so through prayer!

**11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—**

Here Paul begins to tell them his motivation for wanting to come to Rome. He was not wanting to come for the sights and sounds. He wasn't coming as a tourist wanting to see the famous Appian Way or the Coliseum. For Paul it was all about people – all about the furthering of Christ's Church.

Paul intensely wanted to see them in view of his apostolic calling. Paul after all was uniquely "an apostle to the Gentiles" as he terms it in Rom. 11:13. Rome was the Gentile center of the known world. It was the Gentile hub of the entire world. So it makes total sense that Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles would want to make his apostolic mark in relationship to the saints in Rome.

Knowing that this local church had not had the apostolic stamp of approval placed on it, Paul wishes to visit them to do so.

– **Woodrow Kroll**

The idea of imparting some spiritual gift was Paul's way of referring to imparting the blessing of his apostolic ministry.

Paul was not...speaking about the gifts he discusses in chapter 12, because those gifts are bestowed directly by the Spirit Himself, not through a human instrument. He must therefore have been using the term spiritual gift in its broadest sense, referring to any kind of divinely-empowered spiritual benefit he could bring to the Roman Christians by preaching, teaching, exhorting, comforting, praying, guiding, and disciplining. – **John MacArthur**

It is left general because he won't know exactly what their needs are until he shows up. But he wants to be used generally to further establish them in their faith. He wants to strengthen them. The Church at Rome was famous (v. 8) but not firm (v. 11). Paul wants to see them so that he might further strengthen them in the faith.

But then Paul quickly qualifies what he is saying lest they misconstrue what he saying as making it all about him – like he is this apostolic BIG SHOT and all revolves around him. To counter this he says...

**12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.**

Paul didn't see his ministry as just a one way street. It wasn't merely that he would build them up but that there would be a reciprocal ministry. Yes, he would encourage and strengthen them but they would also do the same for him. Building each other up in the faith is a mutual thing. In giving we receive (cf. Acts 28:15).

### **Slide # 8**

#### **Proverbs 27:17 (NKJV)**

**17** As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

And this attitude on Paul's part shows great humility. He didn't make it all about him and his apostolic ministry. Yes, that was a reality, but he also saw the value of the ministry of all the saints as well. Everyone in the body has a God-ordained role to play (2 Cor. 1:24; Eph. 4:16).

### **Slide # 9**

#### **Ephesians 4:16 (NKJV)**

**16** from whom the **whole body**, joined and knit together by what **every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which **every part does its share**, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

And this mutual encouragement and strengthening was based on the fact that they shared a "mutual faith" – both Paul and the saints in Rome.

All true fellowship starts with the reality of sharing a "mutual faith". Peter in 2 Pet. 1:1 calls this "like precious faith" which the NASB translates as "a faith as the same kind as ours".

Everything builds on this. As believers we share in the same reality of having a SAVING FAITH. And then we build on that. Jude 20 says, "building yourselves up on your most holy faith".



Even [the apostle Paul], who perhaps has never been equaled in spiritual stature, says plainly that he needed the encouragement that comes in Christian fellowship. Thus we dare not underestimate the importance of Christian fellowship for Christian growth.

– *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*

**13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.**

Paul wants them to realize that he has often hoped and planned to come see them but it hasn't worked out. He hasn't been avoiding them.

Paul at this point had been an apostle for over 20 years and it deserved some sort of explanation as to why he as the apostle to the Gentiles, although he had been involved in 3 extensive missionary journeys reaching out to Gentiles had never come to the center of the Gentile world – namely Rome. After all, “all roads led to Rome” but Paul had never been there? How come? Here is his explanation.

He had often planned to come but had been hindered until now. He doesn't specify what this hindering involved but many think Romans 15 gives a hint that it has been the fact that he has been preoccupied with ministry in other Gentile regions.

### **Slide # 10**

#### **Romans 15:19–23 (NKJV)**

**19** ...from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

**20** And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named...

**22** For this reason I also have been **much hindered from coming to you.**

**23** But **now no longer having a place in these parts**, and having a great desire these many years to come to you,

Preaching in Gentile regions that were totally unreached was Paul's apostolic missionary priority, and this has hindered him up until now from coming to Rome. But now that the gospel has been introduced in all these places Paul wants to come to Rome on his way to yet another unreached area – namely Spain.

Sometimes Satan hinders (1 Thess. 2:18); sometimes the Holy Spirit prevents movement (Acts 16:6-7); and sometimes the busyness of ministry gets in the way – which had been the situation in Paul’s life up to this point.

Note that “hinderances” by themselves are not a determinative factor concerning the ultimate will of God. They do not necessarily dictate that our motives are wrong. Perhaps it is just a timing issue -as was the case here.

But God’s timing is always perfect and His ways are always higher and better than ours. For example, if Paul had earlier made it to Rome he probably would not have written the book of Romans which has been a favorite of God’s people ever since he wrote it. I am glad he had to write this letter which has been building up the saints ever since.

And then Paul lists another motive in his desire to come to Rome, namely that he might have “some fruit” among them just as he has had among other Gentiles. The context argues that the fruit he has in mind here is the fruit of “converts” as seen in what he goes on to say in verse 14 and 15.

Paul lists 3 motives as to why he desires to come to Rome.

### **Slide # 11**

#### ***Paul’s Motives...***

v. 11 – to **establish** the saints in Rome

v. 12 – to be **mutually encouraged**

v. 13-15 – to have some **gospel fruit**

Paul fully anticipates have some fruit among them – that is seeing people come to faith even as was the consistent pattern among the Gentiles wherever he has gone. God consistently blessed him with fruit – that is a harvest of souls (cf. Jn. 4:35-38; 1 Cor. 3:6-8). The gospel works wherever it is shared. Yes, consistently ONLY a remnant respond in faith – and often it is a very small remnant and yet the pattern is wherever the gospel is shared there is some fruit.

The gospel works wherever it is shared. It is powerful – it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16).

When Paul says, “just as among the other Gentiles” this would indicate that the Church in Rome was predominately (not exclusively) Gentile in make up. Also, the large city of Rome was largely Gentile. Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles is going to the center of the Gentile world to have some gospel fruit in terms of converts. How did it work out...

### **Slide # 12**

#### **Philippians 1:12–14 (NKJV)**

**12** But I want you to know, brethren, that **the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**

**13** so that it has become evident to the whole **palace guard**, and to **all the rest**, that my chains are in Christ;

**14** and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much **more bold to speak** the word without fear.

**14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.**

Here we see into the heart of Paul and what fueled his zeal. He saw himself as a debtor to share the gospel with everyone – with special emphasis on the Gentiles in this verse.

### **Slide # 13**

#### **Acts 26:17–20 (NKJV)**

**17** I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the **Gentiles, to whom I now send you,**

**18** to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

**19** “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was **not disobedient to the heavenly vision,**

**20** but **declared** first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

A debtor is one who owes a debt. Paul saw himself as owing it to the lost Gentiles to share the gospel with them. Paul saw it as a necessary obligation - as a solemn responsibility.

Yes, building on verse 13 this had the Gentiles in view related to his unique apostolic calling which set him apart for the gospel; but ultimately his being a debtor had God behind it (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14). It was Christ Who arrested him on the road to Damascus and placed this “gospel obligation” upon him. He was called and charged with a special gospel calling that he was indebted to pay – as he went along especially in relation to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9:15; 13:47; 22:21; 1 Cor. 9:16; Gal. 2:8-9).

### **Slide # 14**

#### **1 Corinthians 9:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for **necessity is laid upon me**; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

**17** For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been **entrusted with a stewardship**.

Greeks here refers to Gentile “Greek speaking” people. This was considered cultured and civilized and the Roman citizens took great pride in it. In contrast were Gentile “barbarians” who did not speak Greek. Their foreign speaking sounded like “bar-bar-bar” and so they were called “barbarians”. These people were considered to be uncultured and uncivilized (cf. 1 Cor. 14:11).

The wise were the educated or learned Gentiles and the unwise were the uneducated or the illiterate Gentiles. These distinctions had nothing to do with intellect or IQ but rather cultural difference among the Gentiles. All these categories have Gentiles in view.

He does not here mention Jews, because, although full of longing toward them, he had been sent distinctly to Gentiles.

– ***William Newell***

In other words, Paul is saying he saw himself as a debtor to every spectrum of Gentiles. They all needed to hear the gospel and he was under obligation to reach them all – every sector of Gentile society – the cultured and the uncultured – the educated and the uneducated. It didn’t matter – they all needed to hear the gospel. Everybody needs the Lord!

Here was Paul’s burden. It made little difference to Paul whether the man was cultured or crude, an intellectual or an ignoramus. He would proclaim Christ with equal passion to a runaway slave like Onesimus or to a proud monarch like King Agrippa. – ***John Phillips***

In the Jewish mind, there were but Jews and pagans; in the Roman mind there were Greek cultured people and barbarians; but in the mind of God there are those who have the Son and those who do not (1 Jn. 5:12).

Realize that Paul wrote these words after 20 years of missionary service. He didn't say, "Oh my obligation is about done!"

No he still saw himself as being under obligation. Only in the last chapter as martyrdom was immediately at hand did he say, "I have finished the course" (2 Tim. 4:7). Until then we as gospel believers continue to be debtors to share the gospel. We are under obligation until the Master calls us from the field!

By the way in the end it cost Paul his life in paying this debt at Rome -as it were. The payment maybe costly in terms of this life, but Paul told us this:

### **Slide # 15**

#### **2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)**

**17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

The way of Christ is the way of the cross! There is a cross to bear in faithful service. We are not here to live for self- but to live for Christ. From the very beginning of Paul's calling Christ said, "I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:16) It wasn't easy to work at paying off this debt.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe. Here, Lord, I give myself way, 'tis all that I can do. – *Isaac Watts*

Paul special mission was to reach all the Gentiles. And you know what, Paul has had a hand (humanly speaking) in reaching almost every Gentile, after his time, that has ever been reached. Where would we be without Paul's missionary journeys? Where would we be without the inspired letters Paul wrote? Where would we Gentiles be without his ministry? Would the Gentile Church have even gotten off the ground?

Now of course God is sovereign, but that is the point – God sovereignly used Paul to uniquely reach the Gentile world – and oh how effective that ministry has been bearing fruit down throughout the entire Church Age – all glory to God.

**Application:** Do you see yourself under obligation to share the gospel or did this apply only to Paul? In truth we as believers in Christ are all under orders to share the gospel. The great commission with all the authority of Christ is given in all 4 gospels as well as the book of Acts.

### **Slide # 16**

#### **Acts 1:8 (NKJV)**

**8** But you shall receive **power when the Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you **shall be witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

One of the KEY reasons Christ has given you the Holy Spirit is to empower you to be His witness! If you have the Holy Spirit you are expected to be a witness for Christ. You have been empowered to do so!

**Let's suppose** a person discovered a cure for cancer and they knew it. Would they be obligated to share that with others? Yes, morally we would say they would be.

There is such a thing a criminal neglect or criminal negligence. If you are in a position to help a person who is in harms way and don't do anything you can be held accountable for it. If someone is in a serious accident and you happen on the scene you are obligated to render aid to the best of your ability. If someone's house is on fire you do what you can to get them out – if someone is drowning you do what you can to save them. It is a basic moral obligation!

But what about the gospel? Do we sense any obligation? In reality this is the most important obligation of all. Eternity is in the balance! There is an urgency! People have no greater need than to know Jesus. And this is where we come in: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ...” (2 Cor. 5:20).

Yes, my friends we might not realize it but we are indeed debtors to share the gospel. If you know the truth you are responsible to share it. We are to pray for opportunities, we are to do everything in our power to get the gospel out which involves a whole host of variables.

### **Slide # 17**

#### **1 Thessalonians 2:4 (NKJV)**

4 But as we have been approved by God to be **entrusted with the gospel**, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

**15 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.**

Feel the fire in Paul's bones! This was his PASSION!

### **Slide # 18**

#### ***Paul's Gospel Passion...***

- v. 1 – separated to the **gospel**
- v. 5 – for obedience to the faith
- v. 9 – serve with my spirit in the **gospel**
- v. 13 – have some fruit among you
- v. 14 – I am a debtor...
- v. 15 – ready to preach the **gospel**

Paul in the fervor of his spirit with all that is in him (v. 9, 15) was READY to preach the gospel in Rome. He knew what he was going to do if he ever got there. He wasn't thinking about seeing the sights. It wasn't even on his radar.

It was all gospel all the time in Paul's mind. This is all that mattered.

The word "ready" (Gk. prothymon) has the sense of eager. As a debtor to the Gentiles he was not only able and willing, but EAGER to share the gospel in Rome.

An old country preacher was asked how he prepared to preach. He said, "***I read myself full, think myself clear, pray myself hot, and then I let myself go.***" That was Paul, he was ready to let himself go at Rome!

And the thing about someone on fire to share the gospel – it is contagious!

When Paul finally got to Rome and started sharing the gospel in chains, Paul said, it served to strengthen the brethren to be "more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1:14). Indeed, God did use him to strengthen the brethren – even if was in the form of the position of weakness in chains.

When Paul preached in Jerusalem (the religious center of the world) he got mobbed; when he preached at Athens (the intellectual center of the world) he was mocked; and when he got the chance to preach in Rome (the political center of the world) he was martyred. But there was no reluctance! He was ready! All that mattered is that the gospel was preached!

Paul's burden – he was a debtor. Paul's boldness – I am ready!

Application:

### **Slide # 19**

#### **1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)**

**15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always **be ready** to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

Around here we talk a lot about “Live Ready” which is a good motto to live by. And for us as Christians this has special application to always being ready to share the gospel.

As we study Paul's introductory words in Romans we see in his bones a fire for sharing the gospel. May that challenge us! May the importance of sharing the gospel grip us.

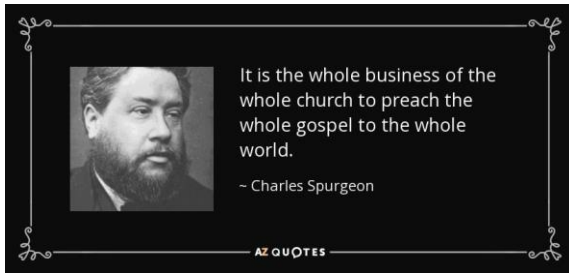
Most of us if we have any maturity in the faith know about the great commission – we know the Spirit has come to empower us to be Christ's witnesses and yet the professing Church as a whole is a dismal failure in this regard.

**Surveys** indicate that only 8% of pastors make evangelism a priority in their life and ministry, and that 95% of those who name the Name of Christ never share their faith. (Tom Watson – Evangelism Priority)

Let me ask you! When is the last time you shared your faith? When is the last time you even prayed about sharing your faith? Do you even see it as an obligation to do so? It should be our passion!

### **Slide # 20**





## **Slide # 21**



When I was in Bible College we had a professor by the name of Abe Penner. He was a real soul winner. Regularly he would start his class by have us sing an old song titled: "Give Me a Passion for Souls".

Give me a passion for souls, dear Lord,  
 A passion to save the lost;  
 O that Thy love were by all adored,  
 And welcomed at any cost.  
 Refrain:  
 Jesus, I long, I long to be winning  
 Men who are lost, and constantly sinning;  
 O may this hour be one of beginning  
 The story of pardon to tell.

As a fitting conclusion to the message today from Romans 1 let me put before you a challenge from another professor we had in Bible College. This is from doctor Harold Berry. Harold is now 89 years old.

A few months ago he wrote:

I had modem problems... I called an agent in the morning about it and concluded by giving him my 30-second testimony. He thought I probably needed a new modem.

It didn't seem to be working at all so I talked to another agent. He definitely said I needed a new upgrade on my modem. I concluded by giving him my 30-second testimony. He ordered the modem from a store. I went to the store to get the modem.

On arriving back home I couldn't get the new modem connected so I talked to another agent. He was able to help and I finished with him with my 30-second testimony. Did the Lord know there were three agents who especially needed to hear my testimony?!

Harold then explained his 30 second testimony...

### **Slide # 22**

I tell a person, "Let me tell you about my wife who passed away almost four years ago." Then I say: We both had trusted Jesus Christ as Savior when we were young. We met in Bible college after she was a registered nurse. We were married 65 years telling others about Jesus and how to get ready for eternity. When it was her time to pass away, she was at complete peace about meeting Jesus face to face. I hope it will be the same for you when your time comes. Someday we will all meet Jesus face to face, either as our Savior or as our Judge. – **Dr. Harold Berry**

And then Harold said...

I encourage believers to compose and memorize a short testimony about the difference Jesus has made in your life. Then you never need to wonder what to say when you meet a stranger.

Be ready always to share the gospel! May our faith be spoken of throughout the whole world! God help us to that end!

If you are here without Christ, I want you to know the gospel is all about WHO Jesus is and WHAT He has done for you. He is the Lord of glory Who came to earth as a man. He is the God-Man. And He came on a rescue mission to pay the penalty for our sin. He died for all our sins – that's grace. And then He rose again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day as Lord-God over all.

God's Word promises eternal life to all who will believe on Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. Have you done that! The Bible says, "Now is the accepted time!" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!