

Passionate about the Church # 2

Romans 1: 8-17

Following a word of greeting and the affirmation of Christ, Paul reveals his sincere desire for the church at Rome. Although he had never personally visited them, he was very concerned with their well being and longed to labor alongside them in ministry. This desire wasn't reserved for the Roman church alone, but clearly Paul was passionate about their well being.

His desire for the church ought to challenge and encourage us as well. We live in a day where the majority has a "take it or leave it" attitude regarding the church, and most have little to do with it. In fact, it is even difficult to generate passion and excitement for the church among those who regularly attend. Most view it as a weekly activity or responsibility rather than who we are and a life we are called to live. I pray we will develop a passion for the church and the work of ministry as Paul did.

I want to examine the [priorities](#) Paul discloses in the text as we consider: [Passionate about the Church](#).

I. A Word of Thankfulness (8-10) – It is evident that Paul is thankful for the church at Rome and the work they are engaged in. Notice:

A. Paul's Rejoicing (8) – [First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world](#). Paul was thankful the church at Rome was active in the faith. They were serving the Lord, but their service wasn't kept within. In fact they were reaching their communities and the uttermost parts of the world. It seemed as if everywhere Paul traveled he was hearing of the faith of the Roman church. They were committed to sharing the Gospel and reaching the world for Christ.

- Shouldn't that serve as a challenge to us? Is our faith and service to the Lord spoken of within our community? Do others know we exist? Are we sharing our faith and reaching others for Christ?

B. Paul's Resolve (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](#); Paul assured the church that they were continually in his prayers. He knew God was working in their midst and he prayed their work would continue. He felt obligated to pray for their continued growth and success in Christ, genuinely desiring greater things for the church.

- Each of us should possess the same commitment for Fellowship. We should offer continual prayer for the needs of our church. Our prayers shouldn't be limited to the needs we have, but should be offered for the church as a whole, throughout the world.

C. Paul's Request (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.* As we will further discuss, Paul had a great desire to labor alongside the church in Rome. He prayed the Lord would allow him to join them at some point. Paul wasn't content to simply pray for the church; he longed to be there with them and join in their efforts.

- That may appear elementary, but it reveals a great truth we need to grasp. Certainly prayer is powerful, and we ought to pray for the church, but there should also be a desire to work within the church. We shouldn't just pray that others be used of the Lord, but genuinely desire opportunities to be used of the Lord ourselves. When God presents those opportunities, we ought to seize them and engage in labor for the Lord.

II. A Word of Thoughtfulness (11-13) – These verses reveal the genuine desire and thoughtfulness Paul has for the church. He speaks of:

A. The Gift (11) – *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;* I doubt any would've enjoyed debating Paul on theological or doctrinal issues. He was a man of wisdom and great knowledge. However, this doesn't reveal arrogance from Paul, but a genuine desire to share what He had received from the Lord. He wanted to give of himself for the greater good of the church. He knew God had blessed him and he wanted to share his gifts with those in Rome. He desired to help equip them in the faith.

- Regardless of who we are, each of us has something to contribute to the body of Christ. We are all gifted in some way and it ought to be our desire to share what God has given us for the encouragement and advancement of the church. We shouldn't keep our gifts to ourselves, but share them with others!

B. The Grace (12) – *That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.* This giant of the faith actually desired to fellowship with the believers in Rome. He longed to find strength and comfort from those of like faith. He doesn't present his desire simply to come and share his wealth of knowledge or address difficulties within the church. Paul wanted to share

with them in the faith and grow personally through a personal relationship with them. They would both benefit greatly from time spent together.

- I have said many times that I am thankful for the church. We need each other. We can gain wisdom and comfort from one another. Each of us has something to contribute to the work of ministry and we benefit from working together!

C. The Goal (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.](#) As of yet God had not allowed Paul to come to the church at Rome, but he genuinely desired to do so. He was praying toward that end and longed to share in their work, seeking to produce additional fruit alongside them. He had worked with many other churches and longed to labor with them in their efforts as well.

- That speaks volumes to me. Paul wasn't seeking fame or fortune. He just wanted to reach the lost for Christ. If he could be of help to the church in Rome, in any way, he longed to do so. That should be our desire also. It isn't about who gets the credit or recognition. We are not engaged in competition to see who shines the brightest. We are co-laborers in the work of the Lord. The end goal for each of us should be fruit produced for the Kingdom!

III. A Word of Truthfulness (14-17) – Paul was excited about the work they were engaged in and the potential of joining them, but he doesn't fail to share truth as he greets them. Consider:

A. His Commitment (14) – [I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.](#) Paul knew his work wasn't limited to Jerusalem, Corinth, Thessalonica, or Macedonia. He had preached the Gospel to many, in various parts of the world, but there was much yet to be done. Paul was indebted to share Christ with all he could, wherever the Lord allowed him to travel. When he arrived in Rome, his ministry would not be reserved for only the wealthy and educated. He desired all to hear of Christ and His saving grace!

- That should challenge us as well. We tend to gravitate toward those whom we perceive as receptive or those whom we think look as if they would fit in within our churches. We are not called to reach only those who look like we do or think like we do. We are called to share the Gospel with the world, regardless of their appearance, social status, race, ethnic or religious backgrounds. [1 Cor.9:22 – To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.](#)

B. His Consideration (15) – [So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.](#) Paul wanted them to know prior to his arrival that he had one goal, one passion and purpose in life, and that was to preach the Gospel to those who needed Christ. His desire to come to Rome was not to advance his agenda or to see the sights, but to preach the Gospel. That would be his focus when he arrived.

▪ That doesn't reveal that we can't enjoy life, but our focus ought to be on the Gospel. Whether we are at work, at the market, or engaged in recreation, our focus should be on serving the Lord and sharing the Gospel with those who need to be saved. That isn't to say we can't take a vacation or enjoy quiet time, but I fear we are not intentional as Paul was in sharing our faith. We should be so passionate about serving the Lord that it just comes naturally wherever we are!

C. His Conviction (16-17) – [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.](#) ^[17] [For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.](#) It doesn't take Paul long to share the desire of his heart and his life's conviction. His purpose is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let's take a moment to consider the aspects of the Gospel revealed.

- **The Passion** – [For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:](#) Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel. He shared it everywhere he went. He was committed to it; that was his purpose in life!
- **The Power** – [for it is the power of God unto salvation.](#) Paul had experienced the power of the Gospel firsthand and was convinced of its power toward all men.
- **The Presentation** – [for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.](#) Paul knew none were beyond the power of the Gospel. It had the ability to reach all who would hear and believe. Everywhere he looked, he saw those whom the Gospel could reach. He was compelled to present it to all who would listen.
- **The Provision** (17) – [For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.](#) This is really rather simple. When we place our faith in the Lord through salvation, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to our account. We are cleansed of sin, reconciled to God, and made partakers of the divine inheritance. We still inhabit a body of flesh which is prone to sin, but through faith we are able to walk with the Lord and fellowship with Him.

Conclusion: Paul's desire for the Roman church is undeniable. He longed to come to them in order to share with them and enjoy their labors together. He knew they would both benefit from working together in ministry.

True to his calling, Paul's focus was on sharing the Gospel. There were many believers, strong in the faith already there, but he knew the harvest was plenteous. He couldn't wait to arrive in Rome and preach the Gospel.

This passage should stir our hearts and challenge us in our efforts for the Lord. We are blessed of the Lord and have the potential to reach the masses. It will require a cooperative effort, depending solely on the Lord. We too must sense the need to share the Gospel and actively engage in those efforts.

Paul was writing to the church, but he shared the Gospel with them. I am reminded of the need to share the truth at every opportunity. We are gathered for Bible study and most are likely saved, but it is possible some are not. If you are unsaved, will you come to Jesus by faith, believing the truth, and receive salvation?