

# Our Gospel Debt Revisited

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I want to make my comments quick and maybe a little bit brief and I want you to take your Romans chapter one and find verse 14 it ought to be a familiar passage of scripture! You remember when sermons are preached don't you even if a year later you revisit a particular passage of scripture you remember that don't you? Well are you awake out there? Okay well somebody is.

Tom thank you. On January 13th of 2013 I stood right here behind this pulpit and I announced to you something that most of us already knew but it was still a kind of an official announcement and I announced in these words the shackles of debt are finally removed and we said amen. I think we even clapped about it and I said that 10 years ago you had been for 10 years rather you've been sacrificing and giving to the Lord and to his church to pay off a debt a building debt and I mentioned clear last January that the October before our elders had recommended to you that we pay the debt off by the 3rd of March this past year or 12 months ago that we pay it off you know debt free by March 3 and then I announced on that Sunday in January three months early that it was done. The building debt had been paid off with matter of fact over seven thousand dollars to spare and then I asked you the question what does all this tell us? What does all this tell us? That God is good? Absolutely. That God is faithful? Surely so. I also said that the people his people known as Highland Park Baptist Church have been obedient and obedient and faithful giving to the Lord giving to his church. Absolutely. It's a testimony of the faithfulness of God. It is a testimony of the spiritual health of our church and then I asked this question now what? I mean the debt's paid for. Now what? Where do we go from here? And I said for 10 years we've had to commit a good bit of our resources to the building debt to paying off of a building debt and now praise God we are free from that debt totally and that's what I said last January January 13th 2013 but then I said there is another kind of debt we have as a church and it is one that we must never forget never lose sight of and yet it is one that if we're not careful we will lose sight of. It's a gospel debt. It's a debt that defines us as a church. A debt that explains the reason for our existence here in Bartlesville. It is a debt that we should welcome. We don't always welcome debt but this debt we should welcome and it is a debt that we should be eager to pay toward. It's very unique in that sense even though it is again a debt that we shall never ever completely pay off and it is and I've already mentioned it it is I think and correctly defined the gospel debt. It is our gospel debt and I said all of this a year ago over a year ago January 13th 2013 and then I preached an expository sermon from this particular text Romans chapter 1 verses 14 through 18 and this morning I want to revisit that text so if you've got your Bibles open listen as I read starting with verse 16 or rather 14. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians both to wise and unwise so as much as in me is in me I am ready to preach the gospel to the to you who are in Rome also for I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes for the Jew first and also for the Greek for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written the just shall live by faith for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness because what may be known of God is manifest to them for God has shown it to them a marvelous passage of scripture in these verses of scripture we have been given a bird's eye view into the very heart and life and ministry of the apostle Paul we're able to see through these words by Paul we're able to see what motivated him what energized him these verses I believe tell us why Paul was if not the at least one of the greatest missionaries who ever lived that Paul namely the Paul considered himself a debtor and that he was eager to pay toward that debt and what compelled him was an unashamed love of the gospel of Jesus Christ now in this passage kind of interesting and perhaps you notice that in this passage Paul inserts three I am declarations you find it three times he he's saying I am three I am declarations I say it's interesting because you remember that Jesus made some very famous I am declarations recorded for us in

the gospel of John I am the way the truth the life I am the resurrection the life I am the bread of life I am the vine and on and on and on it goes and all of those come together to inform us that Jesus is the great I am that is he is God but it also we ought to understand that as born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we are who we are because he is who he is and that's the point here with Paul's I am declarations Paul himself wrote in first Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 10 he wrote by the grace of God I am what I am and so this passage in this passage in Romans chapter 1 Paul makes three I am declarations I am first of all a debtor verse 14

I am secondly a am ready or eager that's verse 15 and then third and finally I am not ashamed verse 16 now I want to submit to you this morning then that what was true of the apostle Paul must be true of every one of us each of us individually all of us collectively as a church that goes by the name of Highland Park Baptist Church so I want very quickly for us to consider these three I am statements first of all Paul said I am a debtor a debtor a debtor to whom was is he referring to his debt to Jesus Christ his salvation debt to Jesus remember that old hymn I had a debt I could not pay he paid the debt he did not owe I needed someone to wash my sins away and now I sing a brand new song amazing grace all day long Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay you remember that that that old hymn well we say amen to that it's absolutely true Paul was a debtor to Christ a debtor to Christ for his salvation absolutely and you and I are debtors to the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation but that's not the kind of debt that Paul is talking about here and that's a related to it in a very very key way but Paul is talking about a different kind of debt look again at what comes next he said I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians and by that Paul just simply referring to all the Gentile nations he's talking about those who speak Greek he's talking about those who speak a different language I'm a debtor to all languages people of all languages what else did Paul say he was a debtor to or who else he said both to the wise and to the unwise that is to the sophisticated on one hand the the the you know the uh uh sophisticated and on the other hand those who are common just common people everyday people to the educated the intellectuals and also to the uneducated so what is Paul talking about pretty clear isn't it I'm a debtor to everyone that's what

[ 9 : 29 ] Paul said to everyone who has yet to hear the gospel and who has yet to believe in it so whoever they are whatever they are wherever they are Paul was a debtor to the world and so then he said I'm ready that's the second I am statement I am ready I am ready verse 15 so as much as is in me now get that I mean how how more committed could you be in that statement very determined very deliberate very resolute total commitment as much as is in me I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also that is I'm ready to preach it to the world and you also in Rome now most uh versions translate this word eager as eager rather than ready and rightfully so the Greek word is prostume and uh thumos rather and from which we get our word thermal thumos is uh thermal or like fire and so uh this particular word uh means that he had an intense emotion a burning desire and so it's more than just simply ready to preach the gospel but Paul was eager eager to preach the gospel to evangelize to preach the good news of redemption in Christ and so that brings us to the very heart of everything Paul has said thus far he is saying I am a debtor to the world that they too might be saved from sin and judgment and and uh and uh and that and because of that I am eager to proclaim God's only provision uh for sin and judgment and salvation and that is of course Jesus Christ and all of this because and here's the third uh declaration I am declaration all of this because I am not ashamed I am not ashamed Paul said I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ now obviously to the world today our day as well as in Paul's day but certainly in our day the message of the gospel the message of the cross is foolishness to many it is a stumbling block to many many others and so whenever and wherever the gospel is preached in this world even in America God help us it induces contempt it invokes opposition it even incites violence in many instances and at the very least it provokes ridicule and let's just be honest for for us the temptation is great to soften it to soften the message of the cross or even to silence it God help us and we're all of us guilty of silence and to cause us to shrink back from being very deliberate about and very bold about our witness of Jesus Christ and so the bottom line is we're often ashamed of the gospel God forgive us but let me ask you something how could we be ashamed of something that is according to verse 16 the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also for the Greek that is everyone you see proclaiming the gospel always results in salvation to those who believe it always and the more we proclaim it the more we witness people believing it Paul for example preached in Jerusalem the religious center of the world and he was mobbed by an angry crowd and yet many did believe Paul later

preached the gospel in

Athens and the which would could be the intellectual center of the world and he was mocked by the intellectuals and yet some believed Paul later preached the gospel in Rome the governing center of the world and was eventually martyred for it but some believed even some inside of Caesar's own household so the gospel is the power of God to salvation to all that believed how could we be ashamed of it God forbid and how could we be ashamed of something where in verse 17 the Bible says in it that is in the gospel the righteousness of God the righteousness of God is revealed in the very proclaiming of the gospel the righteousness of God is suddenly revealed that is when the gospel is proclaimed to unbelievers God reveals his righteousness by saving the unbeliever by saving those who believe and by declaring the believer righteous before him and finally how could we be ashamed of something where in verse 18 where the wrath of God is revealed is through the gospel the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness that's part of the gospel as well how could we withhold that serious reality to this world we're not doing the world any favors by omitting sin and and God's justice from our gospel message how could we hide that very serious truth the seriousness of sin and unbelief how could we hide that from this lost and dying world how could we misrepresent the truth in that way you see we are debtors to the world to proclaim the and to proclaim unashamedly the gospel of Jesus Christ and so let me ask you who holds the note the note on our debt is it God well certainly certainly it's God for saving us and and we owe him an eternal debt a debt that we can never pay not intended to pay for Jesus paid it all but let me tell you who holds the note on our gospel debt I want to show you a bible here that you couldn't read I can't read it's in the Hmong language and this is the one that that you helped to produce and now this very bible has been distributed to 300 families some 300 families in South Vietnam people who did not have a bible in their own Hmong dialect and and they're they're reading God's word and sharing God's word the people who are reading this bible right now and will read it that's they're the people that hold the note on our debt this book right here with our mission strategy in it all the people these various ministries represent the people that all of these various missions uh endeavors are meant to touch and reach with the gospel either directly or indirectly those are the people that hold the note on our gospel debt now they don't know that they hold the note on that debt they don't know anything about us most of them but they do and it is a debt that we must pay we must pay it but we will never ever pay it off and how do we pay that debt well we pay it in a multiplicity of ways we pay it by being faithful witnesses ourselves where we live work and in our families and with our friends as we live out the claims of Christ the truth of the gospel in in our daily lives and also speak those truths verbally and with passion uh to those who need to hear it we pay it by actually going to places that we would not go go to ordinarily be it ukraine or china colorado springs or even on the other side of this town sometimes and opportunities to share the gospel and be a help to people who are in need maybe mexico maybe malawi maybe other places that we don't even know about yet we can go the other way is to support financially to pray to to do so in a host of different ways to pay that debt that we gladly take on all the while knowing that while this world persists until jesus comes we'll be paying on that debt and paying on it and never pay it off and yet we're ready and we're eager because we're unashamed of the gospel of jesus christ so