

The Servant of the Gospel (Part 2)

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[0:00] Take your Bibles this evening, start to say this morning, this evening, and open them to Romans chapter 1 and I want you to find verse 14.

And I'm going to read verses 14 through 17. This will conclude the introduction to the letter, not mine, Paul's introduction.

And Paul says, I am a debtor, debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, that is, since I'm a debtor, so, as much as in me is, that's King James, I cannot get that out of my brain.

That's all right. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

[1:22] For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to 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.

By faith. That's a tremendous passage. Now, it is within that, those few verses, and especially the last two of those three, that Paul really states the theme of his letter.

And we'll get to that eventually. But just to bring us up to speed, last Sunday we talked about Paul's instructions. His instructions to the Roman Christians, and it could be summed up under one instruction.

You are the called of Jesus Christ. That's his instruction to them and to us. Then we talked about Paul's intercession.

[2:25] His intercession in verses 8 and 9, where he is praying for them. And he says, I thank my God for you without ceasing. I make mention of you always in my prayers.

And so his intercession. And then thirdly, we saw last Sunday night, Paul's interest, interest primarily in seeing them. His interest to see them and to impart unto them spiritual truth.

And he's very interested in that. And so much so that he handed God a blank check, said, however you want to do it, however you want to send me, please send me. He said, by any means, by any means, there in verses 10 and 11, his desire was, my desire, Paul's saying, is to come to you by any means.

And God, of course, did send Paul to Rome, sent him in chains. And even in chains, God used him mightily to not only share the gospel with his guards and those of the temple guards, but also to encourage the brethren there in the churches at Rome.

And now we're going to see tonight, verses 14 through 17, what I want to call Paul's intentions. Paul's intentions for writing the letter primarily is what I'm getting at here.

[3:44] This is where he states the theme. I mean, states it clearly, concisely. I opened up our study of the book of Romans by saying that this was the gospel according to Paul.

And the book of Romans is all about the gospel. And so that's the theme and his intentions for writing, and we'll get to that. Now, I'm going to divide that theme or the intentions, rather, of Paul, his intentions in writing the letter, divide that into three parts.

First of all, Paul talks about his burden. And not just simply a burden like maybe we would use the word burden.

I think we're going to see this was a strong burden on his heart, in his heart. And the burden there is for the lost.

It is a burden for the lost no matter who they are and where they are. And so look at verse 14 again and just notice how he defines this burden, how he describes it.

[4:51] He says, I'm a debtor. I'm a debtor. Both to Greeks and to barbarians. Both to wise and to unwise. Essentially, Paul was saying that it made no difference to him whether a man was cultured.

That would be the idea behind the word Greek. The Greeks, the cultured. Didn't make any difference whether they were cultured or crude. Barbarians.

All right. So he's using the extremes on both sides from the elite cultured of the society of his day. That would be the Greeks and the crude, the barbarians.

Or he said, makes no difference to me whether I preach the gospel to the intellectuals. Or to the, those who are ignoramuses.

Ignoramuses, is that a valid plural for that? I don't know. Some of you have to look that up.

Ignorami. Okay. Thank you very much, Wes. I'm glad to be corrected on that.

[6:04] But you get the idea. Right? And that's what he's saying here. The extremes both ways. He says, I'm debtor. Debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians. That is cultured or crude.

Both to the wise, the intellectuals. And to the, and he's being gracious, the unwise. He didn't use the word ignoramus. I did. But that's the idea.

You see the extremes. And so he says, I'm a debtor. Paul would proclaim Christ with equal passion to all.

To all. That's his burden. And it is quite strong. And it just didn't make any difference to him whether he was a runaway slave like Onesimus.

Like we read about in Philemon. Or whether the man is a wealthy monarch like King Agrippa. And Paul had opportunity to share the gospel to people in both spectrum, both ends of the spectrum.

[7:06] From slaves to kings. And he, and he did so because he was a debtor. That's what he's saying here. I'm a debtor. I owe a debt. A debtor to them.

I want to show you something in the Old Testament. That is an interesting story. And I believe valid to make a spiritual connection here.

And it's found in 2 Kings chapter. We'll start with chapter 6 verse 24. Just to set it up. 2 Kings chapter 6 verse 24. You probably have heard this story before.

And most likely have heard it applied in the way that I'm going to apply it. And I think it's a valid application. Verse 24 tells us that it happened after this that Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, gathered all his army and went up and besieged Samaria.

That means the armies gathered all around the city and they, the inhabitants of Samaria, the Jews, were captive there. And there was a great famine in Samaria.

[8:11] That is, their strategy was to starve them out. And that was a very typical strategy in those days. Especially with highly fortified cities that could not be destroyed or could not be penetrated.

And so they would just set up their camps all around the city and just let the people starve to death. That's what had happened here. And indeed they besieged it until in the King James.

New King James carries it over as well. Until a donkey's head was sold for 80 shekels of silver. And one fourth of a cab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver.

Now don't get alarmed. Dove droppings really just beans. All right, just beans. All right, I'm sorry to disappoint you. You're probably thinking, boy, things were really bad.

They were so starved that they were eating dove droppings. But this just kind of carries over from the language and really the idea is beans. All right, so you just put beans down there.

[9:14] But really the point is that even the meager, some of the disgusting things that you would want to eat, like a donkey's head, was going at a high, high price.

So it gives you the idea that they were very much in trouble. Now let's skip over to verse 3 of chapter 7. Here's the point I want to make. Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate, the gate of Samaria, the city.

And they said to one another, why are we sitting here until we die? If we say we will enter the city and famine is in the city and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also.

Now, therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live. And if they kill us, we shall only die. And we're going to die anyway.

And not only are they part of those being besieged, but they were leprous men as well. So they're going to die anyway. So let's just go and, you know, hand ourselves over to the enemy and beg mercy from them.

[10:20] Seemed like a good idea. All right. And they arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians. And when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise, no one was

there.

Now, I did skip a little part here where God spoke through Elisha. And Elisha assured the people that God was going to deliver them.

In fact, he gives a description of the price of food also in the first part of chapter 7. And the price has gone way, way, way down because it's just a sign that God's going to deliver them.

Not sure they believed it. But anyway, it had been predicted already. And so when the lepers get over there to the camp, all the enemy, they're gone. They're gone. Surprise, surprise. For the Lord, and then, of course, we understand how this happened.

And the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses, the noise of a great army. So they said to one another, look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us.

[11 : 23] Therefore, they arose and fled at twilight and left the camp intact, their tents, their horses, their donkeys. And they fled for their lives. And we might add in there, they left all their food too, apparently.

And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank and carried from it silver and gold and clothing and went and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent and carried some from there also and went and hid it.

Then they said to one another, we're not doing right. This day is a day of good news. And we remain silent.

If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now, therefore, come, let us go and tell. Let us go and tell. The king's household.

You see, I think we can easily make a spiritual application here. Because, dear people, by the grace of God, by his grace, and made possible by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, his death on the cross and resurrection, we have in our possession the treasure of the gospel.

[12 : 42] We have the treasure of the gospel. The remedy for all leprous people. Leprosy, of course, was symbolic of sin.

We have the treasure of the gospel. And we have no right to keep it to ourselves. I think that's the spiritual application here to all God's people.

We have no right. We do not well. We do not go. This is a day of good tidings. And we're living in a day of good tidings. I know there's a lot of doom and gloom all around.

And maybe you have found yourself buried under all the bad tidings of our day. But this is really a day of good tidings. Good tidings.

And, of course, the good tidings is the gospel. See, at no time should we ever let our theology. Well, let's just put it plain.

[13 : 45] To let our belief in the sovereignty of God and salvation, at no time should we ever let that hinder us from sharing the good news. If we do so, then we do not have the right theology.

Or may I say it this way, we have not applied it in the right way. Because this is a day of good tidings. And just like these leprous men who have gone, they're going from tent to tent and gorging themselves.

I mean, they hadn't eaten for no telling how long. Gorging themselves and taking silver and gold and gorging themselves, going tent to tent and it finally dawns on them.

Wait, wait, wait a minute. Wait, wait, wait, wait a minute.

All right, so we have Paul's burden. And we need to identify with that burden. We also have Paul's boldness.

[15 : 06] His boldness. Look at verse 15. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome also.

As much as is in me. Now, so let's put this together. Paul said in verse 14 that he was a debtor. And now here in verse 15, he's ready to pay.

That's basically how you put it together. He's ready to pay it. I am a debtor and I'm ready to pay it.

Now, the word ready, we need to maybe park there for just a moment.

Because the word ready here is more than just simply being prepared to preach. You know, I hope that I can say every time I stand up on Sunday morning and Sunday night and Wednesday night, though it appeared that I wasn't quite ready this past Wednesday because I forgot something.

Some of you that come on Wednesday night, you'll know what that means. If you don't, then shame on you. You weren't there. But I hope that I can stand, I can give testimony and I am right with God

in this, that I'm ready to preach.

[16:20] And that's not really what Paul's talking about. Not ready in the sense that he has spent time in his study or has spent time in the word and formulated a well-rounded sermon that's going to expose the meaning of God's word and that given text and make appropriate applications.

It's not that he is prepared and he's ready in that sense. That's not what the word ready means here. The word translates a Greek word. In fact, the word, and I mentioned this word in connection with another passage sometime recently.

I don't remember, but the word is *prothumos*, *prothumos*. And I may have mentioned that *thumos* is the word from which we get our word *thermal*. And *thermal* carries the idea of heat, right?

And so this word that is translated ready here, Now, in some translations, you might see *eager*. And that's better. That's more like the meaning here.

But the word literally means to be in a heat about something. That's basically the idea. And it's used to describe the heat an athlete feels when he or she is competing, running a race, or a part of some athletic event.

[17:45] It's sometimes used to describe the fury of an angry man or woman. Sometimes women get angry. And there's a heat.

We talk about being hot with anger, you know, a fury. It's used to describe bursting out in flames and so forth. That's what the word is used in other places, in other contexts.

Yes. And now here he's not talking about, you know, catching fire here necessarily. And yet the idea is close to this word *eager* as well.

And the idea is that Paul had an overwhelming, all-controlling, consuming passion in his heart and life to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's what he means by, I am ready to preach the gospel to you at Rome as well. It's like a burning fire within him. That's the idea here.

[18:48] Now, I'm afraid, and I think we would admit it, that it's not so with most of us. No matter how much you love the Lord. And we love the Lord and want to obey him and worship him.

And we have tremendous times of worship and experiences in worship with him. And yet, how many of us can identify with Paul at this point?

Maybe some. And maybe we do some of the time. But with Paul, it was just, it was just captive by it, his entire life.

Captive by this. Sometimes, when we share the gospel, we do it almost apologetically. That is, you know, with the idea that we don't want to offend anyone, you know, with the gospel.

Or maybe we're going to make a mistake in how we share it. Or maybe we're, you know, going to muff it. And, you know, it won't work out right, which is ridiculous.

[19:55] But we do not well. Because, again, this day is the day of good tidings. And yet, we often hold our peace. Let's move on to the final characteristic of Paul's intentions for writing the letter.

Or we might say his focus here. He had a burden. He had a boldness. And then, third, he had a belief. A belief. Verse 16 and 17.

And I mentioned this at the outset. Verses 16 and 17 have really been called the thesis. Especially verse 16. Is the thesis of Paul's letter.

And so, let's just look at that again. Verses 16 and 17. Paul said, Paul's burden.

His boldness. And all of that was based upon his belief. That is what he believed about here, specifically, about the gospel itself.

[21:26] The gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ. What he believed about it. And he had, I guess, to sum it up under one sentence.

He had an abiding confidence in the gospel. A confidence in it. And it was based upon three things. First of all. The supremacy of the gospel.

The gospel message. The supremacy of it. He said it is the power of God. The gospel message is the power of God.

What is it? That is the power of God to save? The gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ. You see, it's not the act of presenting the gospel.

Or the act of preaching the gospel. That's not the power. Some people preach it real well. Some maybe not so well.

[22:28] But whether you preach it well or preach it mediocre. In a mediocre way. That's not the power of the gospel. Some people are just. Just seem to be.

Good. Because they kind of have. An extroverted type of personality. Seem good at sharing the gospel. And they can just. Share the gospel. And yet. Their ability to share it.

In a. In a. A very effective way. Or maybe an all conclusive way. Or. Or a very smart way. Is not the power of the gospel. Is it? That's not the power. And so.

The power of the gospel. Or the. Power of God. To save. Is the gospel message itself. You see. A man can sit. On the edge.

Of a bed. In a hotel. And grab. A Gideon's Bible. Out of the nightstand. And he can read that Bible. [23 : 25] And be gloriously saved. Right there. In that hotel room. Without any preacher. Being there. Without any other Christian. Being there. Because that's a testimony.

To the power of the gospel. The power. Of the word of God. See. The power is not. In our church buildings. No matter. How grand.

We may build them. It's not in. Our ministries. Per se. Though. God. God. Uses. These things. As. As the conduit.

For the gospel. To be proclaimed. Hopefully. And if. We're doing anything. That. That God can't use. As a conduit. For the proclamation. Of the gospel.

Then we ought not. To do it. And so. It's not our buildings. Or our budgets. Or our church. Church ministries. Our men's. And women's. And children's. And kids. Youth.

[24 : 19] And senior adult. It's not in anything. It's not in our music ministries. The power is not in. Any of our ministries. And that's why you can have. All of those things. And many many other things.

I might mention. And not necessarily. See a single person. Come to Christ. Because the power of God. Is not in those things. It's not. But.

Now hear me. When you. Preach. Teach. Witness. Share.

The good news. Of Jesus Christ. The good news. That's contained. Right here. In this book. Then people. Get. Saved. That's.

A testimony. Not. To the preacher. It's not even. A testimony. To any man. It's a testimony. To the power. Of the message. Of the gospel. It is.

[25 : 14] The power of God. Unto salvation. To all. Who believe. You see. And God just chose to use that. To. To. To use that method. In fact. In first Corinthians 121.

Paul said. It pleased God. Through. The foolishness. Of the message. Preached. To save. Those that believe. It's. The gospel.

And so. It doesn't take. You know. A seminary degree. Or PhD. It doesn't take. you know, any amount of training to come to the place to understand that if you share the gospel more, you'll see more people saved.

Because that's God's way of saving the lost through the gospel as it's proclaimed. And so the supremacy of the gospel, but also Paul mentions the sufficiency of the gospel.

The sufficiency of it. See, it, that is the gospel, is the power of God to salvation, to salvation. See, this world in which we live does not need a better system of education.

[26 : 22] It needs the gospel. Anything wrong with education? Not at all. But what the world supremely needs is the gospel. Our nation, our country, does not need more social reform.

It certainly doesn't need more health care reform. It doesn't need more finance reform. It needs the gospel. You could go and fire all the politicians that are in Washington today and it would make a bit of a difference.

Because what our nation needs is the gospel. And who's going to bring it to them? We are. And if we feel like Paul, and we should, we have a debt to do that.

We're debtors to the gospel. Peoples of this world don't need a new idea in religion. You know, there are people out there looking for new ways, new ideas.

And I've read some of those ideas. And it's, a lot of them are just a bunch of baloney. What the world needs is the old-time religion.

[27 : 24] The old-time religion will do. It's sufficient. That is the gospel. It is sufficient to transform the life of all who believe. All who believe.

And this is what Paul believed about the gospel. The supremacy of it. The sufficiency of it. And then finally, the simplicity of it. In a sense.

Verse 16. About midway through. Talking about the gospel. It's the power of God. The salvation for everyone who believes.

Believes. The word believes, by the way, could be translated faith. It's pistuo. Translated faith. Believe. Trust. Everyone who puts their faith in Christ. Will be saved. For the Jew first. [28:22] And also the Greek. And he's not talking about a preference per se. He's just talking about a historical chronological order here. It began with the Jews.

God's chosen people. Christ came for the Jews. And the gospel was spread from the Jews to the Gentiles. And so that's why he puts it that way. And he says. For in it. What? The gospel. In it. The righteousness. Of God. The preposition. Of or out of. God. We could translate it. From God. The righteousness. From God. Is revealed. The same idea. When the Bible talks about. Righteousness being imputed. Being credited. To us. That's the. [29:17] That's what the gospel. Does. What God does through the gospel. When he saves. He imputes righteousness. The righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of God.

Is revealed. From faith. Leading to faith. To faith. To faith. To faith. To faith. To faith. I could go on. That's the idea here.

We were saved by faith. But we also live by faith. Faith is the beginning point. And faith continues. And we continue to live by faith.

And that's why he quotes Habakkuk 2.4. The just shall live by faith. That's the simplicity. Of the gospel.

And we just love to make it so complicated. So complicated. That we. You know.

[30:12] Have to do it just the right way. And we need to do it the right way. According to scripture. But listen folks. If we would just simply.

Identify with Paul. As a debtor. As a debtor. Of the gospel. I'm a debtor. To. To all those out here. Whether they're. You know.

Educated. Or uneducated. All those out here. Whether they're wealthy. Or poor. The poorest of poor. Whether they're. You know. Some of the cream of the crop.

In our civilization. Our society. Or whether they're people. That. You're just a little bit. Afraid of. Or maybe a lot. Afraid of. We're debtors. To them.

And we ought. To be burning inside. Like Paul. Ready. To preach. The gospel. To you.

[31:08] All you. Out here. For. Why? We have this. Confidence. What's the confidence? That we can learn. To preach it. Just right.

Where's our confidence? That we can have. A budget. Big enough. To hire. A great staff. So that we can. Really. I mean. Really. Impact. This community.

For Christ. Why should we have. Every confidence? Because the gospel. Is the power of God. Into salvation. All we have to do.

Is proclaim it. Proclaim it. To every creature. And it's the power of God. Into salvation. To all that believe. Transcription by CastingWords