

The Book of Romans - Part 4

Today on "It's a Good Life," we continue our study in the book of Romans. Why is the book of Romans so important? Well, there are many things we could point to, but one of the main aspects is that Paul presents a clear picture of what the Gospel is. Today, there seems to be a lot of confusion as to what the Gospel really is. Some say there's more than one way to Heaven. Some say there's no hell. Some say there's no Heaven. But Paul the apostle goes through this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and he gives a clear outline, a clear definition of what the Gospel really is....the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He also tells us that there is no other way to Heaven other than through Jesus Christ. *God commended His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,* Romans 5:8. As we study the book of Romans we understand, and we're going to get into this later on, how that Paul is a prosecutor, how that as a prosecutor he's presenting a case. He starts out with a plus, telling us about the Gospel and about prayer, and then he goes into the fact that all are guilty before an all-righteous God. There is no exception.

There is no excuse for people not understanding that they are sinners. Some people think they are without sin; they live above sin; but Paul says, no, that's not true. You are a sinner. And today, we need to understand that, as Paul the apostle said of himself, he was the least of all but he thanked God that he was chosen to carry the Gospel to the world. And we need to be thankful to the Lord today, as saved people, that we are allowed to take the Gospel. We are entrusted with the holy things of God, to take Jesus Christ into this lost world, in and around about us, to tell them about Jesus Christ.

Well, the last time we were together, we left off with verse 10 of chapter 1. As I said in the beginning of looking at Romans 1:8-13, I said that Paul gives an example, an outline, eight admonitions concerning prayer. Today, we want to start with number seven, the seventh admonition that Paul gives.

In verse 10, the Bible says, *Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.* Well, the seventh admonition here from Paul is that prayer should be submissive. Note the words in that verse, "by the will of God." Paul did not demand of God or order God or dictate to God what he wanted. He simply made a request and wanted the request granted only if it was the will of God.

When we pray to the Lord, we need to pray expecting that He's going to answer the prayer, but sometimes God does not answer the prayer the way we want Him to answer the prayer. We need to pray and be in submission to the Lord by saying, "Lord, if it be Your will, let this come to pass. If it be Your will, answer this prayer not according to what I want, Lord, but You know better. You answer it the way it needs to be answered." And that's what Paul was saying here in verse 10. He was submissive to the Lord's will.

Number eight, is that prayer should be rightly motivated. Verses 11 and 12 says, *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established: ¹²That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. ¹³Now 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.

But notice down through verse 12, Paul was motivated here. First of all, he wanted to do God's will, according to verse 10. Secondly, he wanted to establish or strengthen, confirm, the Roman believers on the Rock, Jesus Christ, verse 11.

And third, he wanted to comfort and encourage these believers, as well as to be comforted and encouraged by them, according to verse 12. Paul's reasons were good reasons. He was concerned for the glory of God and the good of others.

Now, let's look at a reason that Paul wanted to go to Rome. One of the reasons Paul wanted to go to Rome is in verse 13. He says, *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.*

God makes no mistakes. Paul wanted to go, but God had other plans for Him. He says he was "let hitherto." In other words, he went someplace else. Paul wanted to go to Rome in order to get some results, the fruit. This meant he wanted to see people growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Second Peter 3:18 says, *But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*

We bring honor and glory to God by studying His Word. We bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ by growing in His grace. That means to gain the wisdom of God. Ask for His wisdom. Ask for the knowledge, and that knowledge comes through the study of the Word of God as the Holy Spirit imparts the truth to us as we read the Word of God.

Now, in Paul's case, many times Rome was included on his travel itinerary. But again and again, Paul was hindered from making the trip. In Romans 1:13 and Romans 15:22 it talks about this. And one reason that Paul wanted to go to Rome is found in Romans 1:13.

Now, in II Peter 3:18, once again, it says to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Romans 15:22 says, *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.* Well, did Paul eventually get to Rome? Yes, he did. But he got there in a very unusual way. God does not always answer our prayers as we think He should. Paul's prosperous journey turned out to be one of the most treacherous and dangerous trips across the Mediterranean Sea you could ever imagine. And this, of course, is described in detail for us in Acts 27.

And certainly, the trip was not what Paul expected. He was escorted there as a prisoner. And Paul's prayer was answered, but in a very unusual way. And once again, our prayers get answered, and sometimes they don't get answered the way we want them to be answered, but we need to be in submission to God, for Him to answer the prayer the way He wants to answer.

Now in verse 14, the epistle to the Romans is the true masterpiece of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, which is well worth and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men's souls. It can never be too much or too well read or studied, and the more it is handled and the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes. This that I just read from you is from Martin Luther, the reformer.

Now in Romans 1:14, the Bible says, *I am debtor... this is Paul speaking. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians;*

both to the wise and to the unwise. Here we see an obligation. Paul says, "I am a debtor. I owe something. I have an obligation. I have a Gospel duty to do something." Well, an obligation to whom? The Greeks and the barbarians, Paul said, and these were two classes of Gentiles. The Greeks were those under the influence of Greek culture and language. The Greek language was the universal and common language of the Roman Empire, and Paul's letter to the Romans was written in common Greek, not in Latin and not in Hebrew. The barbarians here were foreigners, those not under the direct influence of Greek culture.

And you can look at Acts 28:2 and 4 in conjunction with this. Now, Paul owed the Gospel to every member of the human race. Life is short. Death is sure. Sin, the cause. Christ, the cure. And we need to take that to heart today. There's only one cure and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Romans 1:15 says this: *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.* Ready, set, go! Paul said, "I'm ready. Ready, willing, and eager to preach the Gospel to you who are Rome." Ready for what? To preach the Gospel. Evangelize. Announce the good news. To proclaim the Gospel. To proclaim means to evangelize. An evangelical church is an evangelistic church with strong beliefs, enthusiastic or zealous in support of the good news of Christ, and very eager to share the good news with other people. Not according to what they think, but what they know according to the Scriptures.

Romans 1:16: *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.*

Notice the three great "I ams" here of the apostle Paul. Verse 14: "I am a debtor," he says. Verse 15: "I am ready." Verse 16: "I am not ashamed." Note this: Paul said, "I am not ashamed." Paul was not ashamed to go to prison for the sake of the Gospel, and he was not ashamed to die for the sake of the Gospel. Christians should not be ashamed of the Gospel, and they should not be a shame to the Gospel by living contrary to its principles.

Second Timothy 1:8-12 says, *⁸Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; ⁹Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ¹⁰But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: ¹¹Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹²For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

This is Paul the apostle speaking in II Timothy 1:8-12. He says, "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel." He says this over and over again. He suffered. He suffered possibly more than any man apart from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but he was not ashamed of that, of suffering.

Are you ashamed of the Lord today? Or do you share Him with this lost world? Can you say with the apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel"? Do you hand out a tract? Do you tell people how to be saved? Is your life the exemplary life? Are you living for the Lord? If

you're saved and you have called upon the name of the Lord to save you, you need to be living for Him. You need to be serving Him today with everything that's within you.

God, help us to serve our Lord and our Savior.

It's been good being with you today, and we'll pick up where we left off today in the next lesson of "It's a Good Life" on the book of Romans.

Look at our Website today, www.LRWM.org.

Until the next time, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.