

The Book Of Romans
True Spiritual Leadership 4 & The Gospel Of Christ
Session 9

Romans 1:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ *So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

¹⁷ *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

Since we have been studying this passage we have seen ten marks of true spiritual service:

A thankful spirit (v8),

A concerned spirit (v9),

A willing and submissive spirit (v10b),

A loving spirit (v11),

A humble spirit (v12),

A fruitful spirit (v13),

An obedient spirit (v14),

And this evening we want to look at two more of the marks that Paul gives us in regard to true spiritual service;

An eager spirit (v15),

And a bold spirit (v16a)

AN EAGER SPIRIT

Romans 1:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ *So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*

Paul's external obligation to minister did not preclude his internal desire to fulfill that obligation. He not only was willing but **eager to preach the gospel to believers in Rome.**

He was as determined to **preach in Rome** as he was to go to Jerusalem, although he knew great danger awaited him there.

Acts 20:22-23 (NASB)

²² *"And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,*

²³ *except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.*

In his spirit he was compelled to go because that was God's will for him. So he declared:

Acts 20:24 (NASB)

²⁴ *"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*

Paul knew that;

Philippians 1:21 (NASB)

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

And;

2 Corinthians 5:8b (NASB)

⁸ to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Paul had the same concern for the Roman believers as for those in Colossae to whom he wrote,

Colossians 1:24 (NASB)

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

Life had but one value for Paul: to do God's work.

He was consumed by an eager desire to serve God, which included serving others in His name.

That absolute commitment was shared by Epaphroditus who;

Philippians 2:29-30 (NASB)

²⁹ Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

³⁰ because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

A BOLD SPIRIT

The final characteristic of spiritual service, a bold spirit, is seen in the following verse;

Romans 1:16a (NASB)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel

Paul knew that Rome was a volatile place and that Christians there had already experienced persecution.

He knew that the capital city of the empire was steeped in immorality and paganism, including emperor worship.

He knew that most Romans would despise him and that many probably would do him harm. Yet he was boldly eager to go there, for his Lord's sake and for the sake of the Lord's people.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Romans 1:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

After having gained the attention of his readers by explaining the purpose of his writing and then introducing himself (1:1-15).

Paul now states the thesis of the epistle.

These two verses express the theme of the book of Romans, and they contain the most life transforming truth God has put into men's hands.

To understand and positively respond to this truth is to have one's time and eternity completely altered. These words summarize the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul then proceeds to unfold and explain throughout the remainder of the epistle.

For that reason we will make our comments here somewhat brief and then do a more detailed discussion of these themes will come later in the study.

As noted at the close of the last chapter, the introductory phrase **for I am not ashamed of the gospel** adds a final mark of spiritual service to those presented before. That is unashamed boldness.

Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, chased out of Thessalonica, smuggled out of Damascus and Berea, laughed at in Athens, considered a fool in Corinth, and declared a blasphemer and lawbreaker in Jerusalem.

He was stoned and left for dead at Lystra. Some pagans of Paul's day branded Christianity as atheism because it believed in only one God and as being cannibalistic because of a misunderstanding of the Lord's Supper.

But the Jewish religious leaders of Jerusalem did not intimidate Paul, nor did the learned and influential pagans at Ephesus, Athens, and Corinth.

Paul was eager now to preach and teach the gospel in Rome, the capital of the pagan empire that ruled virtually all the known world.

He was never deterred by opposition, never disheartened by criticism and never **ashamed**, for any reason, **of the gospel** of Jesus Christ.

Although that **gospel** was then and is now today, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, it is the only way God has provided for the salvation of men, and Paul was both overjoyed and emboldened by the privilege of proclaiming its truth and power wherever he went.

Although every true believer knows it is a serious sin to be ashamed of his Savior and Lord, he also know the difficulty of avoiding that sin.

When we have opportunity to speak for Christ, we often do not.

We know the gospel is unattractive, intimidating, and repulsive to the natural, unsaved person and to the ungodly spiritual system that now dominates the world.

The gospel exposes man's sin, wickedness, depravity, and lostness, and it declares pride to be despicable and works righteousness to be worthless in God's sight.

To the sinful heart of unbelievers, the gospel does not appear to be good news but bad, and when they first hear it they often react with disdain against the one presenting it or throw out arguments and theories against it.

For that reason, fear of men and of not being able to handle their arguments is doubtlessly the single greatest snare in witnessing.

It is said that if a circle of white chalk is traced on the floor around a goose that it will not leave the circle for fear of crossing the white mark.

In a similar way, the chalk marks of criticism, ridicule, tradition, and rejection prevent many believers from leaving the security of Christian fellowship to witness to the unsaved.

The so called health and wealth gospel that has swept through much of the church today is not offensive to the world because it offers what the world wants.

But that kind of gospel does not offer the **gospel of Jesus Christ**.

Like the false teachings of the Judaizers, it is "a different gospel" that is, not the gospel at all but an ungodly distortion,

Galatians 1:6-7 (NASB)

⁶ *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;*
⁷ *which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*

Jesus strongly condemned the motives of worldly success and comfort, and those who appeal to such motives play right into the hands of Satan.

A scribe once approached Jesus and said;

Matthew 8:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ *Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."*
²⁰ *Jesus *said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

Shortly after that,

Matthew 8:21-22 (NASB)

²¹ *Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."*
²² *But Jesus *said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."*

Geoffrey Wilson wrote, "the unpopularity of a crucified Christ has prompted many to present a message which is more palatable to the unbeliever, but the removal of the offense of the cross always renders the message ineffective. An inoffensive gospel is also an inoperative gospel. Thus Christianity is wounded most in the house of its friends" (Romans: A Digest Of Reformed Comment [Carlisle, Pa.. Banner of Truth, 1976]. P. 24).

A pastor was asked to speak at a youth rally, and after doing so the wife of the rally director approached him and expressed an unbiblical mentality that is common in the church today, she said, "Your message offended me, because you preached as if all of these young people were sinners." And so the pastor replied, "I'm glad it came across that way, because that is exactly the message I wanted to communicate."

Paul's supreme passion was to see men saved. He cared nothing for personal comfort, popularity, or reputation, He offered no compromise of the gospel, because he knew it is the only power available that can change lives for eternity.

Now in verses 16 and 17, Paul uses four key words that are crucial to understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ:

Power,
 Salvation,
 Faith,
 Righteousness.

We will take these up when we come back together again for this study.