

Romans 1:8-15

Paul's desire to communicate God's Word to the Roman people

Introduction: Paul had never physically been to Rome, yet his heart had gone there many times. There may have been some in Rome who felt slighted that the great "apostle to the Gentiles" had not yet visited the capital of the Gentile world.

1) Paul's grateful prayer stated—1:8

- Paul's gratitude is:
 - a) Important—**First**, *I thank*
 - b) Father-centered—**my God** (the Father)
 - c) Mediatorial—**through Jesus Christ** (cf. Heb. 7:25)
 - d) Inclusive—**for all of you_{pl}**,
 - e) Purposeful—**because your_{pl} faith is proclaimed in all the world.**
 - i) This was before telephone, television, internet, radio, newspaper, or satellite. The "all the world" was a figure of speech/hyperbole for the boundaries of the Roman Empire where Christianity has already been established.

2) Paul's grateful prayer explained—1:9-10

- a) His oath concerning incessant prayer—*For [ga,r] God is my witness ... that without ceasing I mention you_{pl} always in my prayers,—1:9-10*
 - i) Paul was *serving* God *with/in my spirit in the gospel of His Son* (cf. 1:4)
 - (1) "Serve" [latreu,w] is usually associated with priestly worship.
 - (2) Whatever we do in helping to carry out the redemptive mission of Christ is by definition an act of worship. (R. Mounce)
- b) His urgently submissive desire—*asking [de,omai] that somehow ... I may now at last succeed* (lit. "may be helped on the way") *in coming to you_{pl}.*—1:10
 - i) How? *by/in [evn] God's will*—not Paul's will, but God's

3) Paul's 4 reasons to visit Rome—1:11-15

- *11 For I long [evpipoqe,w] to see you_{pl}* (cf. 15:23-24)
 - a) Reason # 1: *that I may impart/share [metadi,dwmi] to you_{pl} some spiritual gift*
 - i) Paul wanted to bring some spiritual benefit to them.
 - b) Reason # 2: **to strengthen you_{pl}** [sthri,zw]—spiritual determination
 - i) *12 That is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours_{pl} and mine*
 - (1) Faith in God that is active in both Paul and the Romans.
 - (2) Paul was not ashamed to say he needed encouragement from them as well.
 - ii) *13 I do not want you_{pl} to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you_{pl}—1:13-14* (cf. Acts 19:21)
 - (1) *(but thus far have been prevented)*—Paul had other ministry responsibilities (Romans 15:19, 22-23); sometimes the prevention was from the Spirit (Acts 16:6); sometimes from Satan (1 Thess. 2:18), and

sometimes from other people (1 Thess. 2:16; 3 John 1:10). This includes time Paul spent in prison and in ministries to other communities.

- (2) The Old KJV used the word “let” here, which means hindered. Such as volleyball or tennis, when the served ball hits the net, we have a “let ball,” meaning the ball was hindered.
- c) Reason # 3: *in order that* [i[na] *I may* **reap some harvest** (lit. “have some fruit”) *among you_{pl} as well*—Paul anticipated positive results, but it was not necessarily numerical
- i) *As among the rest of the Gentiles*—indicating their background
- d) Reason # 4: ¹⁴ ***I am under obligation*** (debtor)
- i) *Both to Greeks and to barbarians* [ba,rbaroi]
- (1) All uncultured people groups, “superior” and “inferior” cultures or ethnicities.
- ii) *Both to the wise and to the foolish*
- (1) Educated / intelligent and uneducated / lack of intelligence
- e) Conclusion: ¹⁵ ***So*** (in this way) *I am eager /passionate* [pro,qumoj] *to preach the gospel* [euuaggeli,zw] *to you_{pl} also who are in Rome*
- i) There is no reluctance on Paul’s part to fulfill God’s revelation to him (Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-20). Any delays have been providential.

4) Things we need to remember:

- a) Who is God in this passage?
- i) The One to whom Paul prayed
- ii) The One who knows Paul’s motives and actions
- iii) The One whom Paul served/worshiped in his spirit
- iv) The One who placed this eagerness in Paul’s heart
- v) The One who prevented Paul from coming to Rome
- b) What do God’s people do in this passage?
- i) They prayed for one another.
- ii) They served/worshiped in evangelism, which is nothing less than presenting the clear, unmistakable Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- iii) They longed to see each other.
- iv) They longed to encourage each other.
- v) They longed for fruit in ministry.
- (1) Fruit in the NT is almost always an emphasis on *quality*, not *quantity*.
- (a) Cf. John 4:34-38
- (2) Seeing results for one’s labors is not wrong, as long as the desire for fruit is that God may be glorified. This means that the *methods* used and the *motivation* behind the labor in achieving fruit should be honoring to God.

Next time: Romans 1:16-17