

## Romans 1v1-17: Paul's Personal Commitment to the Gospel of God

Ian Gibson (February 2013)

v1-5: "*separated unto the gospel of God*", i.e. Paul's separation unto the gospel.

v9: "*I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son*", i.e. Paul's service in the gospel

v14: "*I am debtor*", i.e. Paul's indebtedness to preach the gospel.

v15: "*I am ready to preach the gospel*", i.e. Paul's readiness to preach the gospel.

v16: "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*", i.e. Paul's confidence in the truth of the gospel.

### v1-5: Paul's separation unto the gospel

In v1, Paul introduces himself as the messenger in a 3-fold way:

- As servant, "*a servant* (bondslave) *of Jesus Christ*", *his servitude*.
- As apostle, "*called [to be] an apostle*", *his calling*.
- As evangelist, "*separated unto the gospel of God*", *his consecration*.

As "*bondservant*", all was done out of service for his divine Lord & Master, "*Jesus Christ*". A slave has no rights or will of his own, entirely at the disposal of his master, available to do his master's bidding, he is bound to serve. Paul acknowledged this servitude to Christ his Lord from the moment of his conversion; Acts 9v6 "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do*", and he maintained that attitude of servitude throughout his Christian pathway, in spite of the personal cost (see Gal 6v17).

As "*apostle*", a '*sent one*', Paul recognized his divine calling, a divinely appointed office:

v5: "*we have received grace and apostleship*".

1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1v17: "*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel*".

Romans 11v13 "*For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles*".

As evangelist, he was set apart; *his consecration* to the message, the great priority & focus of his life.

Gal 1v15-16: "*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called [me] by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen*".

Acts 9v15: "*a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles ... kings ... the children of Israel*".

Rom 15v16 "*That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God*".

We too can be vessels of God, set apart by Him unto His glorious gospel; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 4v7 "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*"

### v1-2: The Source of the Gospel:

The message finds its source in divine eternal council, and takes character from a just & righteous God, His message for humanity; that demands appropriate reverence & dignity as we are privileged to handle it.

The gospel is a message which the OT scriptures "*promised afore*" (v2); the unity of God's Word.

Principles central to the truth of the gospel such as repentance, justification & faith in God are in the OT.

Jonah 2v9 "*Salvation is of the LORD*"; Isaiah 53v11 "*by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many*",

Jer 23v6, 33v16, "*The LORD our righteousness*" (Jehovah-Tsidkenu); Hab 2v4 "*the just shall live by his faith*".

### **v3-4: The Subject of the Gospel:**

**“Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord”**; v9 **“the gospel of His Son”**, v16 **“the gospel of Christ”**.

- His Manhood / humanity; **“made (come, JND) of the seed of David according to the flesh”** (v3).
- His holy deity; **“declared [to be] the Son of God with power, according to the [a] Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (of dead ones, plural)”** (v4).
- His Lordship; **“Jesus Christ our Lord”** (v3 in AV, v4 in JND’s New Translation).

Concerning His Manhood / humanity, He was of that royal line, **“the seed of David”**.

Acts 13v23: **“Of this man’s seed (i.e. David, the son of Jesse) hath God according to [His] promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus”**.

Acts 13v38-39 **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man (Jesus of Nazareth) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”**.

Rom 5v15 **“much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, [which is] by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”**.

Concerning His holy deity, marked out to be what He eternally was, Son of God, by His raising of dead ones, in accordance with His own divine Spirit of holiness. He has divine resurrection power.

Death could not exist in His holy presence; John 11v21 **“Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died”**.

His perfect Manhood & His absolute deity are both necessary for Him to be the Saviour, the **“daysman betwixt us”** (Job 9v33), the **“one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”** (1<sup>st</sup> Tim 2v5).

He must be both Man & God with regard to the great gospel truths of substitution & propitiation.

Concerning His Lordship, **“Jesus Christ our Lord”**, from the moment of conversion (see Rom 10v9, Acts 10v36).

### **v5: The Terms & Scope of the Gospel:**

The clear terms of the gospel, as far as man is concerned, is the **“obedience of faith”** (JND), see also Rom 16v26.

Saving faith is repeatedly viewed in Scripture as an act of obedience (see 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1v2,22, 4v17, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess 1v8).

At conversion, there is complete submission to the claims of a holy & righteous God (see Rom 10v3).

This is perfectly illustrated by the conversion & subsequent life of Saul of Tarsus.

Faith is to be active & effectual in my life; it brings me to a condition & prevailing attitude of obedience.

The faith that saves must also be the faith that obeys, and goes on obeying the whole Word of God.

The scope of the gospel is **“among all nations”**; unlimited availability of God’s salvation, **“unto all”** (ch3v22).

Under law, God dealt directly with one nation particularly, Israel; now under grace, God goes out directly to **“all nations”**; Acts 1v8 **“ye shall be witnesses unto Me ... unto the uttermost part of the earth”**.

That is the unlimited scope geographically of the gospel (see also Rev 7v9).

It is all **“for His Name”**, i.e. for the honour & glory of the Name of our Lord.

### **v6-8: What the Gospel Makes Believers:**

From God's perspective, a delightful 3-fold comment on what they were, as those who had obeyed the gospel:

- ***"called of Jesus Christ"*** (v6); i.e. ***"called to be Jesus Christ's"***, His own precious possession (see Jn 17v6).
- ***"beloved of God"*** (v7); i.e. the particular objects of His love (see Rom 5v8, 1<sup>st</sup> John 4v10).
- ***"called [to be] saints"*** (v7); i.e. ***'holy ones'***, sacred to God, set apart to Him.

From man's perspective, ***"your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world"*** (v8); testimony to the reality of their faith, which manifests itself to others (see also 1<sup>st</sup> Thess 1v8).

Our lives are to be a living testimony & witness for Christ & the gospel, and so we must ensure that our lives are consistent with our faith; ***"let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ"*** (Phil 1v27).

### **v9: Paul's Service in the Gospel:**

Calling upon God as his witness, ***"I (worshipfully) serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son"***.

It is a spiritual & sacrificial service in the gospel, rendered to God in a worshipful way, out of devotion to God.

An act of worship ascending to God for His pleasure; ch15v16, ***"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable"***.

In our royal priesthood service, we are to ***"shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"*** (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2v9).

Priestly standards regarding holiness of life & consecration to service, must all apply in our service in the gospel.

Such worshipful service in the gospel is also a prayerful service, ***"that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers"***.

### **v10-13: Paul's Desire to Visit Rome:** See ch15

### **v14: Paul's Indebtedness to Preach the Gospel:**

***"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise"***.

Paul is very conscious of the responsibility to discharge the debt, as a binding obligation he must fulfil.

In Romans, the theme of being debtors in spiritual matters:

- Ch8v12: ***"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors ..."***, i.e. to the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, to be subject to His leading & guiding in every aspect of our lives.
- Ch13v8: ***"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another"***; we are to be debtors to one another in the matter of loving one another.
- Ch15v26-27: ***"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are"***. Having previously enjoyed their spiritual help, these Gentile believers considered themselves in debt to them.
- Ch1v14: We are debtors to sinful humanity in the matter of acquainting them with the truth of the gospel. Acts 4v20 ***"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"***. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 9v16 ***"for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"*** Luke 4v23 ***"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent"***. The necessity to ***"Preach the word"*** (2 Tim 4:2) is ours; it is a compulsion of divine grace.

### **v15: Paul's Readiness to Preach the Gospel:**

***"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also".***

Paul was prepared to put his whole life & self into the work, to give it his all, to leave nothing of himself out of it. He was eager, willing & zealous to be preaching at Rome, or wherever else, whatever opportunity arose. Paul's particular desire was to bring the gospel of God to Rome, the great imperial city, filled with multitudes of proud & arrogant Roman citizens, to preach boldly a message that would condemn them before God. Whether it was immoral Corinth, or idolatrous Ephesus, or religious Jerusalem, or proud imperial Rome, Paul was ready / eager / willing to preach Christ & Him crucified.

### **v16-17: Paul's Confidence in the Truth of the Gospel:**

***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for ...".***

We make no apologies as we unashamedly make known the mind of God about sinful humanity.

To be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, is in effect to be ashamed of Christ Himself; Mark 8v38 ***"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels"***.

Paul was equally unashamed of all the suffering & imprisonment he experienced; ***"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner"*** (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim 1v8, see also 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim 1v11-12).

We must never be ashamed of the simple preaching of the cross of Christ, His sacrifice, His precious blood.

Paul's confidence in the message is because:

- It reveals the saving power of God; ***"for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"*** (v16).
- It reveals the absolute righteousness of God; ***"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"*** (v17).

v16: The message is endued with divine saving power, ***"the power (Gk dynamos) of God unto salvation"***; it saves believers from the penalty & power of sin, and ultimately from the presence of sin.

This power unto salvation operates & becomes effectual in ***"every one that believeth"***.

1<sup>st</sup> Cor 1v18 ***"the preaching of the cross ... unto us which are saved it is the power of God"***

2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 4v7 ***"the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"***.

It is the power of new creation; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 4v6 ***"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"***.

***"the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe ... working of His mighty power"*** (Eph 1v19-20).

v17: Under law, righteousness was demanded, but sinful man failed hopelessly.

Under grace & the gospel of Christ, righteousness is revealed from God, the means of being right with God.

Faith becomes my power for living every step of my Christian pathway, i.e. ***"from faith to faith"***.

Hab 2v4, ***"The just shall live by his faith"***, quoted also in Gal 3v11 & Heb 10v38.

The principle of faith that you start with, is also the faith that you go on living by daily, until we see our Lord.