

Rooting Through Romans Pt 3 Romans 1:8-15, The Faithful Church

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church, 11/01/2020

Romans 1:8-15†

†8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 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.

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

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

In this message, Lord willing, we will look at verses 8-15 which further details Paul's greeting to the Church at Rome and his expressed desire to come and see them in person.

Let's keep in mind who this letter is written to – he says it in the first part of verse 7, **Rom 1:7a** To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:...

We explained last time, whenever someone is called a saint, it means a saved person. The opposite of a saint is a sinner. So, Paul is writing to saved people and they are in Rome. This is what we refer to as the Church at Rome or the Church in Rome.

Of course, in our modern, western way of thinking, every time we hear the word church we automatically think of a building with a steeple. A place where people congregate together to worship God. But that is not a church, that is a church building. It is a place designated for the church to meet in.

A church by definition is “a called-out assembly or body of believers.” As far as a local New Testament Church, just as we have in our Church By-Laws, by definition is: “a local assembly of baptized believers who have voluntarily joined themselves together to carry out the Great Commission.”

That is, after all the purpose of the church. Some people think the purpose of a church service is to hopefully see someone saved during the service. That's not what a church service is for at all. A church service is a service where saved people assemble together to worship and be equipped to share the gospel. It is great whenever a lost person comes and sits in on a service and gets saved but that's not the purpose of a church meeting.

Well, the church at Rome knew exactly what the purpose of a church meeting was and they are doing church right. Look at what Paul says to them in our opening text in verse 8 **First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.** -- Isn't that a wonderful thing? This church is not known for their music program or their Christmas cantatas, or their golf tournaments, bake sales, or Pilates classes; no, this church is known for their **faith**.

What is faith? The Bible defines it in **Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

May I remind you of what we just studied a few weeks ago in the Gospel of Mark? It says in **Mark 16:16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Without faith we cannot believe. If we cannot believe then we cannot be saved and we are damned.

Paul says this to the church at Ephesus: **Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Not only is faith essential for salvation, but it is also essential in your Christian life in order to please the Lord. In Hebrews Chapter 11, that great faith hall of fame chapter, we read this: **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

So, faith is the most important thing in the life of a Christian period. Paul says those church folks in Rome have such faith that it is **spoken of throughout the whole world**. This means the church is not a secret organization. It's not a private club. They are active and visible and are physically and spiritually involved in the ministry. People have seen and heard how they live faithful lives that honor the Lord and Paul says that he is thankful to God for them.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

Paul not even ever visiting the church at Rome still prays for them **without ceasing and always**. That's a pretty remarkable statement! Can you imagine the Apostle Paul telling you that he prays for you without ceasing and always?

The truth is, one of the greatest things you can do for others is to remember them in your prayers. I believe prayer is one of the most neglected privileges in most Christian's lives. I know I don't have the prayer life that I wish I did. Wouldn't it be great to be known as a man or woman of prayer?

I'm reminded of a man named **Hegesippus**, who was a Christian writer of the early Church, in one of his memoirs he writes about the prayer life of the Apostle James, and he says: ... **He alone [James] was permitted to enter the holy place: for he did not wear any woollen garment, but fine linen only. He alone, I say, was wont to go into the temple: and he used to be found kneeling on his knees, begging forgiveness for the people-so that the skin of his knees became horny like that of a camel's, by reason of his constantly bending the knee in adoration to God, and begging forgiveness for the people.** §

Would to God that we would spend even half that amount of time on our knees praying for others. You can guarantee that Paul did.

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

All along we have been stating that Paul desired to come to Rome to visit the Church. This is a reference to that. Not only has been praying for the Church always and without ceasing, but he is also praying that it be the Lord's will for him to come and see them in person. This wasn't just a spur of the moment desire either, Paul

says that he has been requesting this “at length,” most likely it had been for several years Paul prayed for this and even had attempted to come at times before but was hindered. We see that on down in our text in verse 13 where he says [that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, \(but was let hitherto,\)](#)

Now look at verse 11 and we see one of the reasons Paul desired to visit them: [11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;](#)

I can't help but notice what a different man Paul is than he was before he was saved. This man who is now tenderly writing to a group of church members, most of whom he has never met, yet he has a pastorly love for them. Much, much different than the man we read about in [Acts 9:1-2 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.](#)

By the time Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, he had been in Christian service for over 20-years. Paul has grown in grace, faith, and love toward his fellow man and it shows up in this passionate desire to be with this group of people.

Look at what he says he wants to do for them when he gets there: [For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift](#) His desire was to help them spiritually, not physically, or emotionally, but spiritually help them.

I think that is where a lot of well-meaning Christians go wrong. They dwell more on the physical things than the spiritual things. They go about looking for “good deeds” they can do for others in the name of Christ or in the name of the Church. While good deeds are good things, they are not the most needed things. What is needed most and what is the purpose of the Church is to impart spiritual gifts. No, I'm not talking about speaking in tongues or healing the sick, but rather helping others grow in the faith of Christ spiritually. That is what Paul wanted for this church.

But, the Church members at Rome weren't the only ones that would benefit from this, look at verse [12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.](#)

Did you see that? Paul also desired the he himself would benefit from being with this great Church. He says that they have a “mutual faith.” Isn't that the way it ought to be? We should be able to meet other Christians on the other side of the world or the other side of the United States and though we may have never met before we should have something in common, **mutual faith in Christ.**

I used to go on a lot of business trips across the U.S. and I went to some pretty sinful cities; Las Vegas, San Francisco, San Diego, and I would feel like a fish out of water in those places. But, every now and then I would run into someone in those faraway places that shared the same faith in Christ as I have. You can't even imagine what is like to be 2,000 miles away from home (which is how far it is from Knoxville to Las Vegas, and discover a brother in Christ – it gives you great comfort.

That is how it should be with saved people. According to the Book of Acts, members of the early church had “singleness of heart” and “all things in common.” I wish we could say the same thing about the church today. It seems nowadays there is

more strife and separation between Church people than ever before. Churches splitting up over the least little thing. It all boils down to selfishness. If we were more concerned about our brother than we are ourselves then we wouldn't see such division. We should have “**mutual faith.**”

Paul knew that being with this great Church in Rome that it would benefit both them and him and that would bring comfort.

[13 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.](#)

Here, again, Paul is explaining that he has been trying to get out to Rome to see them but he keeps being hindered. He doesn't give any details on what has held him up but most likely it was work in the ministry, imprisonment, sickness, or a whole manner of things that have happened.

We find here that Paul loves fruit. No, not apples, oranges, and bananas, but Spiritual fruit. He says: [that I might have some fruit among you also](#) For a Christian, Spiritual fruit should be our motivation for everything we do. Whether it be preaching, teaching, singing, witnessing, or whatever you are doing in the name of Christ or the Church, it should be for the purpose of Spiritual fruit. That is the only means in which we can measure our faith – what kind of fruit it produces.

If you preach or teach God's Word – is there fruit from those who listen? Are they learning and growing in the truth of the Scriptures?

If you are singing hymns and Spiritual songs, is it edifying the church service and bringing glory to the Lord Jesus?

Paul desired to see the fruit of souls being saved, of the church being edified, and growing spiritually. I can't help but think of what he told the Church at Corinth in: [1 Corinthians 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.](#) As long as we follow that biblical pattern, we will see fruit as a result.

Notice what Paul says at the end of **verse 13: even as among other Gentiles.** This is further proof that the church at Rome was mainly a Gentile congregation. He knows based upon his prior experience that by preaching the gospel among the Gentiles there will be results and he fully expects the same results in Rome. That is why he says what he does in the last two verses of our text:

[14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.](#)

When Paul says “**I am debtor**” he doesn't mean that he is financially in debt to the Greeks and Barbarians and owes them something – it means he is obligated to preach the Gospel due to God appointing him to be a preacher unto the Gentiles.

We see that in Acts chapter 9 when the Lord was speaking to Ananias: [Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.](#)

And, Paul reiterates that fact in [Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:](#)

† All Scripture from Authorized King James Bible

‡ Color Code: Blue = Main text, Dark Orange = Other Scripture, Red = Words of Christ, Black = Pastor Byron commentary

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