

“Our Reputation – Part 2”
Romans 1:8
(Preached at Trinity, December 10, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last week we began looking at the section comprising **Verses 8-15**. After his salutation Paul spends a few verses with an emphasis on their mutual encouragement and edification.
Romans 1:12 – “. . . that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”
2. Paul began the section by expressing his great gratitude to God for them.
Romans 1:8 – “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
3. Paul is grateful for their reputation, their consistent testimony to the world. What was the chief element of their reputation that others spoke of? Their faith. “that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
4. Paul is talking about a particular faith that manifests itself in particular ways.
5. Last week we saw that the first aspect of this is saving faith, Paul is talking about the manifestation of their salvation.
As the world looked upon the church of Rome they could see evidence of this miraculous work of God. Paul was thankful because their genuine faith demonstrated the power of God. God powerfully moves upon His people granting unto them faith
6. Second, their faith was marked by a great confidence in God
Paul says, “I thank my God” and knows that God has become their God.
The expression “my God” is a wonderful statement of faith for Christians
 1. It is a testimony to God’s Covenant promise. We are His people and He is our God.
 2. This is our great confidence. God comes to our defense. He is our protector and deliverer.
 3. Through every trial we have learned to trust God
7. The point is salvation doesn’t just produce an invisible faith.
True faith is lived, it is demonstrated – it can be seen.
True Believers live according to the testimony of genuine faith.
8. Last week I told you I wanted to give you seven examples of this testimony.
Remember, Paul is thanking God for their living faith what was being expressed as a testimony to the world.
Romans 1:8 – “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
9. This reputation manifests itself in both the individual Christian and in the body of believers, the church.
What are some of the changes in the life of one who possesses saving faith?
Remember again, regeneration changes our motivation for obedience, service.

10. Last time I brought you the first of the seven
The life of faith is a life of love – it is God’s mark upon us
1 John 4:7-8 – “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”
Last time I focused on our love for our brethren but it also affects our love for the lost.
- I. What are some other changes faith brings into the life of a believer?
- A. The life of faith is a life of discipline
1 Corinthians 9:27 – “But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 9:27** – “But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”
1. Saving faith results in diligence in duty
 2. Sadly, most people schedule sin into their lives – they justify themselves
They purpose not to pray. They purpose not to obey the Lord’s day.
- B. The life of faith is a life given away
1 Corinthians 6:20 – “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”
1. The child of faith lives a life of sacrificial service to Christ
 2. This is a testimony to the world
- C. The life of faith is a life of contentment
Philippians 4:11-13 – “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
1. When you have Christ you have everything
 2. The word that describes the Christian is “Satisfied”
 3. The world teaches consumerism. Christians should be a frugal people.
- D. The life of faith is a life of joy
Galatians 5:22 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy”
1 Peter 1:7-9 – “. . . Jesus Christ: ⁸ Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: ⁹ Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.”
1. We might define joy as extreme gratification.
Webster: “the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires”
 2. For the Christian joy is the sense of delight or exhilaration in knowing Christ. We have tasted of the heavenly gift. We have found the greatest of all treasures.
 3. We know what it means to be forgiven, to be reconciled to God.
 4. Nothing on this earth can give such delight
The world should be able to witness our great joy in Christ – a joy that is not shaken by earth’s circumstances.

- E. The life of faith is a life of holiness
Hebrews 12:14 – “Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”
- Holiness refers to a separation – Christians are people who have been separated.
2 Corinthians 6:17 – “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,”
1 Peter 2:9 – “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
 - The world sees that we are different from them – a people set apart
- F. The life of faith is a life of peace
Romans 1:7 – “Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- The Christian is in harmony with Christ. We are able to think clearly. Our decisions are directed by Divine truth. The lost man is in a continual conflict with his own conscience.
 - There is a peace in the presence of Christ knowing we have His favor.
 - The Christian is in harmony with other men.
There is true peace in not feeling the need to compete.
- G. These things are demonstrated to the world
- They will hate us because our lives condemn them
 - They will hate us because we belong to Christ
 - But let them marvel at us and hopefully glorify God in their salvation
1 Peter 2:11-12 – “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; ¹² Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
 - The early church was hated, yet the people stood in awe of them and God continued to add to the church.
NAS **Acts 5:13-14** – “But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*,”
 - What is the reputation of our church? We should pray that we become such a church that others will stand in awe of us – an awe that can only come when God’s people are so radically different that people have to stand up and take notice.
- II. There is one more aspect to this verse—an evangelistic aspect. We can also see faith here as the system of belief – our faith that must be shared – It can be equated with the Gospel.
KJV – “your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
NAS – “your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.”
- A. This is a fitting statement in the context of Paul’s salutation
- He stated in **Verse 1** that he was “separated unto the Gospel of God”
 - He defined this Gospel in **Verses 2-5** – It is the message of Christ

3. He stated in **Verses 6-7** that the Romans were blessed in this Gospel – they were the beloved of God, called to be saints.
4. They were brought into the faith through the Gospel of Christ
- B. Now he states that their faith was spoken of throughout the world – the people around them
 1. This has evangelistic overtones
 2. Their lives and message was having an effect upon the world
This was the same testimony that the Thessalonians had
1 Thessalonians 1:8 – “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.”
 3. Their faith was going forth in the world as an example.
Everywhere they went they were speaking of Christ. They were living for Christ. And multitudes were being added to the church.
 4. Most important, Paul was grateful that the name of Christ was being spread throughout the world. When faith spreads the name of Christ is exalted.
- C. Our faith must be sound abroad
 1. This should always be on our mind
 2. Do you live your faith so that it sounds forth to all men?
 3. It’s by genuine faith that we are able to reflect the light of Christ and shine forth in this world of darkness.

Conclusion:

1. How are we to evaluate a church?
 - A. Which is better – a church of 300 members where most are carnal and living in unbelief or a church of 50 members who love Christ with a passion?
 - B. How often do you hear the charge of hypocrite leveled at local churches?
 - C. Rome was a church with many members whose reputation was well known
 - a. What kind of reputation does our church have?
 - b. First, to have a reputation at all demands that others know us
If we never do anything we will have no reputation at all
 - c. When others look at our church what do they see?
2. What effect does your membership have on our church’s reputation? Do you promote it? Does your life paint a positive reputation for our church?