

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 1

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the book of Romans

As I mentioned last week, this is a letter that Paul wrote to believers in Rome during one of his missionary trips while he was in Corinth.

It is a letter that is deep in theology.

One could argue that it is the deepest theological book in the New Testament

And so after spending last week – looking at Paul introduce himself to the readers in Rome by providing them with his identity and in doing so – remind us of our identity in Christ, now we are going to look at the motivation for Paul writing this letter.

Let's pray...

Read Text

I want you to write this verse down -

[Pro 21:2 NKJV] 2 Every way of a man [is] right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.

Translation – God knows our motivation.

Why do we do the things that we do?

Why are we here this morning?

Why do we serve in ministry?

Why do we go up to someone that is hurting and tell them that we are going to pray for them?

What is our motivation? – that is a question that we all need to ask ourselves.

Because one of the reasons that the religious rulers hated Jesus so much was because Jesus over and over again, questioned their motivation.

The religious rulers they were self-righteous.

Their actions were motivated by pride, by status by a lack of love and compassion to their fellow man.

Jesus exposed them.

Jesus set the example for our motivation in this life:

He tells His disciples in John 4:34 **“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work”**

Or we could say -

My motivation is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

Something that might come as a surprise to us is that God cares more about our motivation than our actions.

We become so focused on our actions that we lose sight of what our motivation is.

This is why this letter is so important – and why this letter transforms hearts – because it causes us to examine our motivation – because that is what Paul is going to provide for us in our text this morning – what is his motivation.

And his motivation – as we will see, should be our motivation.

Because what Paul is going to argue throughout this letter is that it is only through Jesus that we can have the right motivation to do what God has called us to do.

Let's look at our text -

[Rom 1:8-17 NKJV] 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

In detailing his motives, Paul begins by I thank my God – had you make a note of that. Because in that phrase, Paul uses the word “my” – it speaks of personal possession.

Paul has a heart of thanksgiving and appreciation for all that the Lord has done, is doing and will do.

Paul was so thankful for the faith of this church.

The Roman Christians had a reputation – and it was a good one.

As Paul was journeying through Asia Minor and Greece, he would hear about the strength of the believers in Rome and their faithfulness.

And Paul wanted to let them know –

I have heard about your faith, it is strong, it's vibrant, it's real, it's genuine.

Now, remember where these Christians lived.

Paul is not writing to the church in Jerusalem –

He is writing to the church in Rome

Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire

Not only was it the political capitol of the Roman Empire -

It was also the religious capital of the Roman Empire

It was a pagan filled atmosphere – yet there were believers that were growing in faith in the midst of everything that was going on.

The question people ask is – what made this church so strong?

What was it about the church in Rome?

And what we find in the New Testament is that the believers in Rome were sharing, loving and serving one another – wherever they went.

Their testimony should be our testimony.

Whether we are at home or away

Do people see that we love Jesus,

Do people see that we serve Jesus in a capacity that is visible to everyone.

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 was transformed by the gospel of grace

And it was that transformation – that work of God in and through his life – that became the motivation to do what God had called him to do.

Remember from our study last week – how Paul opened up the letter, Paul a bondservant – a slave by choice –

And I had you make a note I serve with my spirit –

Before Paul was transformed by the gospel of grace, he had seen and done many things that were superficial and artificial – he had the wrong motives.

It was all about religion.

So Paul, as he is writing to the Romans, he knows that not all service for God was pure and sincere.

So – he wants them to know where his heart was as a servant of God.

By the way – the word that is used here for serve in the New Testament it used to describe both service and worship to God.

Serving God is a form of worship—

the greatest of all worship we can give to God—our life in service to Him as a living sacrifice!

But we have to understand, if our service for God is going to truly be worship to Him, holy and acceptable—it has to be done out of the right heart and with the right motives:

I also had you make a note where it says – gospel of His Son

The Gospel of God is a Person—He is the Lord Jesus Christ—He is the Good News—God who became Man and died in our place, as payment for our sins!

The gospel of God isn't a set of moral principles or a list of dos and don'ts – that is the gospel of legalism in the flesh. Not the gospel of grace.

And then you will notice at the end of verse 9 –

Paul tells them I am praying for you.

He didn't just simply tell them that he was going to pray for them – he prayed.

10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.

One of the burdens of Paul's prayer was that God would permit him to visit Rome and minister to the churches there.

Paul desired to go to Rome

For Paul, Rome represents the will of God

In other words – as Paul was traveling around proclaiming the gospel to the gentiles – there was that voice inside of him that kept saying – you must go to Rome, you must go to Rome, you must go to Rome.

By the way, will Paul go to Rome?

The answer is yes –

Eventually, Paul will make his way to Rome

But before Paul gets to Rome,

He is going to go to Jerusalem where he will be arrested.

He is going to be beaten

He is going to be moved from prison to prison to prison

He is going to be shipwrecked on an island where he is going to get bitten by a snake

Every imaginable hardship – Paul is going to experience – but he is going to get to Rome.

Why am I telling you this?

Because God has a will and a plan for each and everyone of us

And the truth is that we will go to the destination that God is calling us to go to.

God has a plan and a purpose

He is leading each of us in a specific direction and we will get there –

Maybe not in the way we think we anticipated

Maybe not in the way that we hoped we would

But we will get there

Just like Paul

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—

Keep in mind that Paul had never been to Rome as he is writing this letter.

So as Paul is writing this letter –

He wants to make sure that the reader understands that his desire to go there is not because he wants something from them – his desire or motivation to go to Rome is because he wants to give them something.

What does Paul mean when he refers to spiritual gifts?

This is what it does not mean –

Paul, as he is writing this down, he is not saying – I think these guys in Rome need the gift of tongues – I will give them that. Or the gift of prophesy – and so forth.

Those are gifts that are reserved for the Holy Spirit to give.

Paul simply wants to give them a gift that is spiritual in nature.

Paul in his letter to the church in Thessalonica

[1Th 2:7-8 NKJV] 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing [mother] cherishes her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

Paul's motive is ministry.

He wants to help build them up in the faith

And he is going to do it through preaching, teaching, exhorting, praying, guiding and discipling.

He wants to serve people

He wants to encourage people

And because he knew how the Body of Christ works, he trusted there would be people there who had gifts he'd benefit by as well.

He would be encouraged as well

He would be ministered to as well

Look at verse 12

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

Paul is willing to both give spiritual gifts and to receive spiritual gifts from these Roman saints.

Think about what this means –

Paul was called by Jesus to be an Apostle to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

Just because he was an Apostle, Paul didn't think he was on some lofty pedestal above everyone else.

He is willing to receive from those that are less experienced, those that are less mature than he is, those that have less ability than he does.

And Paul says – I don't care

In humility and modesty, he is willing to receive from the most modest Christian.

He's expecting them to encourage him with their faith as well.

Paul didn't have the rockstar mentality –

But Paul wants the Romans to know something – that they have something to offer – not only to each other but to him as well.

Church, we may think that we have more knowledge and that we have more maturity and understanding and experience than those around us.

But that brother or sister sitting next to you or behind you or across the room – they may have something to offer you.

Something to give to you.

Some word of encouragement to give to you.

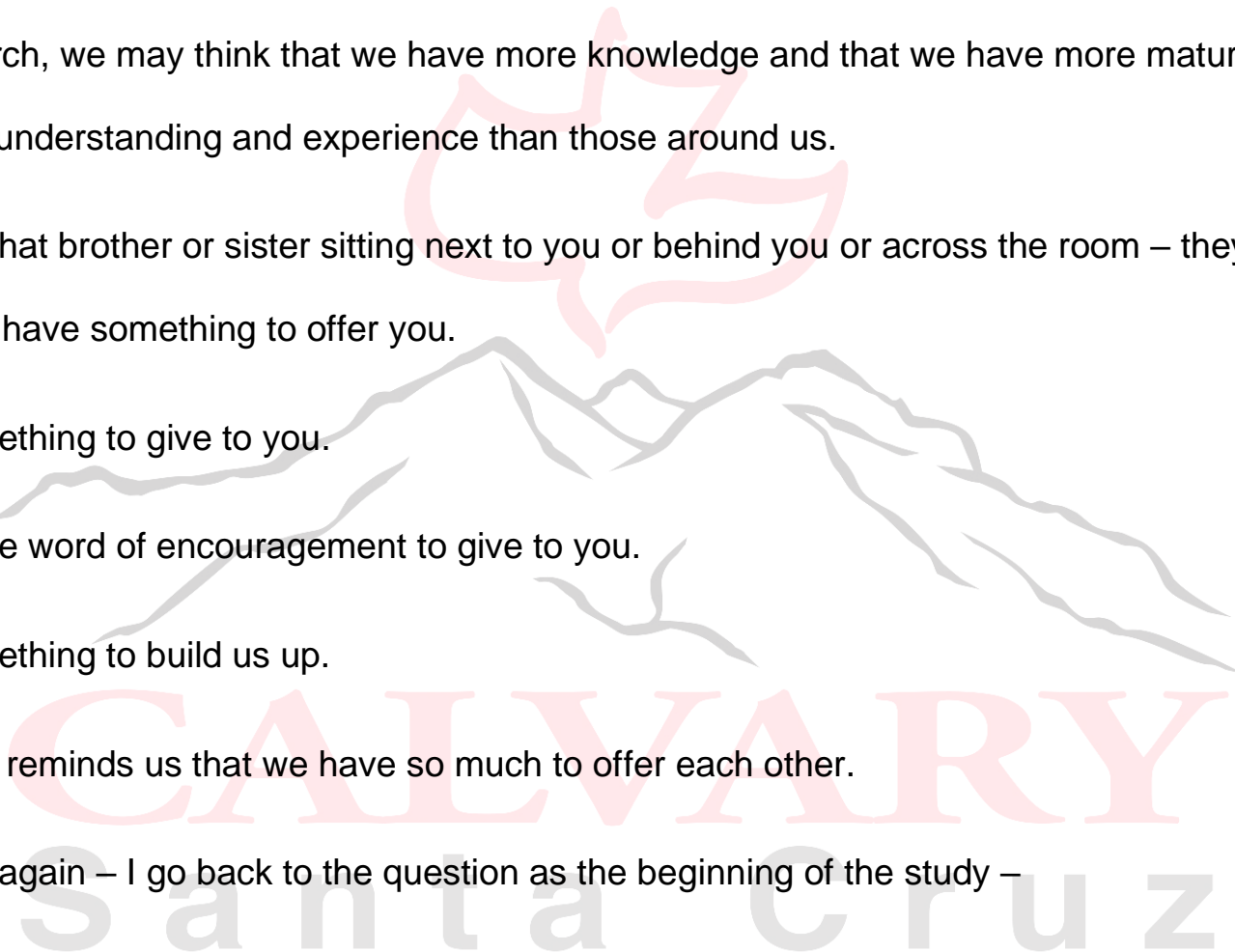
Something to build us up.

Paul reminds us that we have so much to offer each other.

And again – I go back to the question as the beginning of the study –

What is our motivation?

Why are we here?



13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

Paul had often planned to visit Rome—but had been hindered.

He knew he was called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles & simply sought to be faithful where ever he was.

When he heard about a place where there were Gentiles but no church, he saw it as an opportunity.

If all roads lead TO Rome, all roads lead FROM it as well!

Rome was the best place for Paul to set up shop so he could reach as many as possible as quickly as possible.

So he made plans & tried to go, but God shut the door.

What is Paul's motivation here –

He wants to see fruit in Rome, the same way that he saw fruit in Ephesus and Corinth and the churches in Galatia and the other churches.

He is anxious to see God at work in Rome as well.

14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.

Here in verse 14 – once again we see Paul’s motivation.

I had you make a note of the first of three I am statements that Paul is going to make in verse 14-16

His motivation – I am a debtor.

To whom does Paul owe this debt?

Greeks and Barbarians – which means to the entire world.

Because one was either a Greek during this time or a barbarian(non Greek).

I owe everyone I meet something -

What is the debt that Paul had?

His calling was to share the gospel with the entire world.

When I bought my Blue FJ – back in 2006 (the last time I bought a new car)

For 60 months – I was debtor to bank that gave me the car loan.

But when I sent that 60th payment – I learned something.

As uncomfortable as it is owing someone something, it sure feels good when we no longer have that debt.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are debtors to the world – just like Paul.

We have an obligation to share the gospel with the lost.

Regardless of who they are, we owe them the good news of God's saving grace.

Later on in Romans 13:8 – Paul is going to write - **Owe no one anything except to love one another.**

And church, the way we discharge the debt we owe others is by sharing the gospel with them.

The greatest love we can give others is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

And you want to know the sad part about the church as a whole today -

The church today looks to the world to gain something that it thinks that it needs that the world does not have instead of giving the world something that it already has.

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

Here we have another of Paul's motivation for visiting Rome.

It was because of his absolute confidence in the power of the gospel.

Paul was never reluctant to share the Gospel.

He never hesitated.

He was always eager to tell others about what Jesus had done for them.

This excitement came because of his complete conviction the Gospel was nothing less than the very power of God at work to affect salvation in those who believe it.

He had seen it first hand as he was preaching to the gentiles and he had experienced in his own life.

I am only going to touch the last two verses – because

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

To most of the world at that time, the Gospel was a sad joke & the followers of Christ were deemed to be fools.

The followers of Christ were despised as weak because they valued love over revenge & humble service over cruel ambition

Christians worshiped a crucified God!

From an earthly perspective, Paul had every reason to be hesitant & cautious in sharing the Gospel.

In his travel preaching the gospel – he had been called a fool, he was stoned and left dead, all because of the Gospel.

Yet here he says he's not ashamed. The reason why he could find no shame in the Gospel was because of what he knew it was – the very power of God to affect salvation.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Faith is where this thing called salvation starts, and faith is how it is shared.

Paul is talking about the process of how a person is saved, how it starts with the faith that one person has in trusting in Jesus, and how they share what they believe with another person, and that other person then starts to believe.

It's when someone sees how I am trusting in Jesus, it stirs up something inside of them to want to trust in Him too.

I want to conclude with this –

Since we see Paul's motivation for what God called him to do.

Albie Pearson – he went to be with the Lord earlier this year

For those who don't know who Albie was – he was a baseball player for the Angles.

He was the face of the team in the early 60's

He was also a Christian – but he was in the closet.

He didn't share his faith.

One day – Marilyn Monroe was scheduled to receive a check from the Angels for Muscular Dystrophy

So because Albie was the face of the team – they asked him to walk her to receive the check before the game.

So Albie said that when he met Marilyn Monroe – that immediately the Holy Spirit brought to remembrance every bible verse he had heard about the love of God, the forgiveness of God and the promises of God.

And he says that he felt this overwhelming sense to tell her about Jesus

And as he looked into her eyes, he said that he had never seen someone who was more empty and more desperate and more broken.

And Albie ignored the Holy Spirit

It was her last public appearance and she died a few weeks later of a drug overdose.

And Albie said, "That is when I knew, that I needed to share Christ with everyone I came in contact with"

And by God's grace - Albie did just that – and began ministering to the youth and eventually becoming a pastor.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

What is our motivation –

AW Tozer – “It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it. ”

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace!

