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What Motivates Us As Christians ?

ROMANS 1:8-17

Introduction

1. What motivated you to be here this morning?
2. What motivates any of us to live a life in obedience to our Lord?
3. This morning I want us to look at those things which motivated the apostle Paul to want to visit the Christians in Rome.
4. The church in Rome was not one which he had established through his preaching or one which he had visited.
5. However, it was a congregation about which he had heard much.

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.” (Romans 1:8, NASB95)

6. It is very likely that much of his knowledge concerning this congregation had come to him from two close friends who helped him in his ministry both in Corinth and in Ephesus — Aquila and Priscilla.
 - a. They worked side by side during the eighteen months he was in Corinth (Acts 18:2,11).
 - b. The also traveled with him to Ephesus and utilized their home as a place where the church could meet (1 Corinthians 16:9).
 - c. However, they were originally from Rome and had probably told Paul much about the brethren there.
7. Now, it seems that everywhere Paul went, he encountered someone who was either from the church in Rome or had visited there and had nothing but good to say about them.
8. Now, Paul was constantly asking God in his prayers to allow him to go visit

them.

9. At least three things motivated Paul in his desire.
10. As we look at these three motivators behind Paul's desire to go visit the saints in Rome, I encourage you to consider them in your own life and service here in this congregation.

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A. THE ENCOURAGEMENT WE GIVE TO AND RECEIVE FROM ONE ANOTHER

“For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.” (Romans 1:11–12, NASB95)

3. Paul has two reasons for wanting to visit the brethren in Rome:

- a. First, “so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established” (v. 11).
 - 1) Paul doesn't say what spiritual gift he hopes to impart to them.
 - 2) He simply wants God to use him in whatever way He chooses to strengthen the church there in Rome.
 - 3) This is a mindset I encourage all of us to develop in our lives — that one of the reasons we are here every time we have opportunity is so that we might be used by God in whatever way He sees fit.
 - 4) There are so many ways that you can be used by God here.
 - a. Jesus said that we are to “love one another” (John 13:34) — this is a great need in our world today.
 - b. Paul said that we are to “be kind to one another” (Ephesians 4:32), “encourage one another” and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

- c. You can help someone bear a burden which is too much for them (Galatians 6:2).
 - d. You may never know the extent of the good you do here or even of the people you encourage by your presence, but God does.
- b. Second, “that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine” (v. 12).
 - 1) Paul wants to be encouraged by the brethren in Rome.
 - 2) He wants that his faith should encourage them, but also that he might be encouraged by their faith as well.
 - 3) When various missionaries we support come to visit us, they are encouraged by you.
 - 4) Those who go on the mission trip to El Salvador each year will tell you that they are definitely encouraged by the brethren there.
 - 5) When we gather together for Bible study and worship or simply for fellowship, we find ourselves encouraged by our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - 6) Have you ever found yourself on a Sunday or Wednesday saying, “I don’t feel like going today,” but you went anyway?
 - 7) Did you find yourself later saying, “I am sure glad I went today. It really lifted my spirits.”

Slide 3**B. OUR SENSE OF OBLIGATION TOWARD GOD AND EACH OTHER**

“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.” (Romans 1:14–15, NASB95)

- 1. The NIV84 translates verse 14 as “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.”
- 2. The NKJV translates it as “I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians,

both to wise and to unwise.”

3. “Greeks and barbarians” describes everyone under the Greco-Roman culture of Paul’s day.
4. “Both to the wise and to the foolish” means those who are intelligent and those who aren’t — again, everyone!
5. As one commentator said, “Paul sees himself as a man who cannot rest until every gospel cent is paid to every Gentile creditor.” ¹

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6. There is a hymn which our youth have sung and perhaps some of you here as well:

He paid a debt He did not owe,
I owed a debt I could not pay.
I needed someone to wash my sins away.
And now I sing a brand new song: “Amazing Grace”
Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay.

7. Paul saw himself in debt to Jesus Christ for a price he could never pay — the price of his salvation.
8. This is why he was “eager to preach the gospel” to those who were in Rome and beyond.
9. You and I owe the same debt — one which we can never repay.
10. Will our sense of obligation cause us to reach out to those around us?
11. Does it motivate us to share the good news?

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C. OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*, Preaching the Word Commentary, (Crossway: Wheaton, Ill.1991), p. 27.

righteous man shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16–17, NASB95)

1. Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel” — this means that he had confidence in the gospel. Why?
2. Why? Because of what Paul knew the gospel to be.

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3. First, it is good news.

- a. It is good news of God’s love for us (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:4-5)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave . . .” (John 3:16a)

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),” (Ephesians 2:4–5, NASB95)

- b. It is good news of a Savior, Jesus Christ, who came into this world “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
- c. It is good news of abundant, eternal life

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b, NASB95).

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4. Second, it is God’s power to save us.

- a. The word translated as “power” here in verse 16 is the Greek word *dunamis*.

- b. It is the word from which we get “dynamite.”

- c. In his letter to the saints in Corinth, Paul said “the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18, NASB95).

- d. James, the brother of our Lord, wrote that we should “receive with

meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21, ESV).

- e. **The writer of Hebrews lets us know that** “the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12, NASB95)

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- 5. Third, it reveals to us “the righteousness of God.”
 - a. Throughout the rest of this letter, Paul will continue to speak about this righteousness.
 - b. In his letter to the saints in Philippi, he states that this righteousness “comes from God on the basis of faith” (Philippians 3:9).
 - c. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, Paul tells us how this “righteousness of God” **is transferred to us** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB95)

Conclusion

- 1. It is possible for each of us to stand sinless before God.
- 2. It is possible for each of us to know that we have eternal life.

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- 3. Near the end of his first letter, the apostle John wrote, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13, NASB95).

4. Three verses before this, John wrote of “the testimony that God has given concerning His Son” (1 John 5:10).
5. In the next verse, 1 John 5:11, he wrote, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”
6. Do you need our Lord to take away your sin today and give you eternal life?
7. Are you willing to turn from the sin in your life and be baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins?
8. Will you come to Him today?