

Romans

Longing to Go to Rome ([Romans 1:8-15](#))

Read: Longing to Go to Rome (Romans 1:8-15)

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. **9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. **11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— **12** that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Explain: Longing to Go to Rome (Romans 1:8-15)

In Romans, Paul writes his longest salutation (introduction) of any of his letters.

Picking up in [Romans 1:8](#), Paul is still in his introduction but transitions from a biographical part to drawing a personal connection to the Christians in Rome.

8 **First, I thank** [In all of Paul's writings he uses a form of **thanks** 49 times. Where in the order of actions did Paul put giving thanks? **First**: coming before all others in time or order, foremost in position, rank, or importance. Thank: express gratitude, appreciation, or acknowledgment. One of the greatest assets for a Christian is the ability to boldly give thanks to God.] **my God through** [through: moving in one side and out of the other side, continuing in time toward completion of a process. How do we go to God? **Through Jesus**.] **Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world** [Michelle Erickson sent **John MacArthur: Some churches are famous because of their pastor, their architecture, their stained glass windows, or their size or wealth. The church in Rome was famous because of its faith**.] **9** **For God is my witness** [witness: one who has personal knowledge of something], **whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son** [Paul reminds them he is a servant], **that without ceasing I mention you** **10** **always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.** **11** **For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—** **12** **that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine** [Paul knew the importance of

fellowship. Don't fight this battle alone. He also shows us the **borderless church**]. **13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.** [Paul repeats himself in sort. **Romans 1:10, 11, 12, and 13** all have similar meaning. Perhaps to reinforce to the readers in Rome that he's been trying to come. Also, he reinforces his desire to serve alongside them. The terminology also points to the church being mixed with both Jews and non-Jews. He uses the terms brothers and later states among you only to specify as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. **Chris Arnold: Romans strongly identified with and emulated the ideals of Greece. They even stole the Greek gods and gave them Roman names. So it appears that Paul was mindful of his audience and their collective history.**]

14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. [Who would want to say they are a barbarian? Paul is basically referring to people that would not be members of the developed world (as it was known in 56 AD). So in other words the **Gospel** is for you, them, us, **everyone**. **Chris Arnold: Paul blew down cultural and social walls and put up a new sign that said, "ALL ARE WELCOME."**]

15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. [Jim Fleming: I love how Paul doesn't see the preaching of the gospel as something that only unbelievers need. Believers need the gospel to be preached to them as well. God help us if we get too big for the gospel. We always need it and can scarcely get enough of it.]

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Giving thanks is **important** and not simply a **checkmark**
2. Active faith is **active**
 - it impacts nonbelievers
 - it encourages believers

Jessica Norris sent **Woodrow Kroll's** comment:

7 characteristics of Paul's prayers:

1. Prayer should be thankful
2. Prayer should be personal
3. Prayer should be continual
4. Prayer should be sincere
5. Prayer should be flexible
6. Prayer should be submissive
7. Prayer should be specific

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. What is our first priority in conversation to God?
2. What is our reputation among other believers and among nonbelievers?
3. Is our faith encouraging to others?

Next week: The Righteous Shall Live by Faith (1:16-17)

16 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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- The Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask the Holy Spirit for help
- Read **Romans** (once) and **Romans 1:8-15** (a lot)
- Talk to someone in our class about **Romans**
- Read your resource and email Jim (jim314@yahoo.com) helpful quotes and/or insights by Wednesday

Quotes & Observations

Albert Whiting (Calvin)

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

The author once again breaks down the verses into sections:

- Paul's thoughts on the Roman Faith (8-10)
- Paul's First Ministry Motivation: Mutual Encouragement (11-12) "He is not in it for what he could do for himself but what he could do for them."
- Paul's Second Ministry Motivation: A Sense of Obligation (14-15)
- Paul's Third Ministry Motivation: Confidence in the Power of the Gospel (16-17)

Paul says that he is eager to preach the gospel to those in Rome. I love this! We should all be eager to serve God every day.

He tells a story about Linus throwing a stick for Snoopy and while Snoopy's first instinct is to chase the stick he pauses and decides not to. "When I'm reminded of the gospels power to change lives, I am motivated to stop 'chasing sticks' and get back to what is really important."

We must never be ashamed . . . the wonder is that God is not ashamed of us.

Chris Arnold (Barclay)

So, Paul starts out praising and complimenting the church in Rome. My first thought is: Why? Barclay states that Paul was being a good teacher and cultivating growth through praise, rather than compelling performance through criticism. And, indeed, it shows that Paul loved the church and wanted it to flourish. Vs 10 underscores Paul's longing to be with the church. Barclay seems to think that Paul was treading softly in order to avoid "trespassing" upon the Roman church's religious turf. Vs 14 struck me as interesting. What did he mean he was under obligation to the Greeks and the Barbarians.

I did some research, mostly on Bible.org (strikes me as a Wikipedia of the Word). Apparently there was a large contingent of Jews in Rome prior to the rise of the Roman Church. As early as 59 BC, Cicero remarked that the Jews were populous and they stuck together: maintaining their cultural identity, language, and faith (and maybe even fostering some separatist/revolutionary ideals) even while being in Rome "proper." So there was a strong Jewish element in the city already.

Also, Peter is given much credit in the founding of the early Roman Church. Given the early History between Paul and Peter, maybe it isn't too much of a leap to say that Paul may have been mindful that some folks hold grudges, even when the two people with

who the religious debate originally started have gotten over it and moved on. But that's speculative.

Anyway, There are also Multiple ethnicities present in Rome. Romans strongly identified with and emulated the ideals of Greece. Heck, they even stole the Greek gods and gave them Roman names. So it appears that Paul was mindful of his audience and their collective history.

The thing that struck me, personally, is that Paul was CONSTANTLY thinking and praying ahead. When so many of us pray for things of the moment, those we know, and personal desires and concerns, Paul is praying for others, and making it known that he is praying for them. What a great example of humility and selflessness, that puts a figurative arm around a shoulder and says "You are not alone in this journey." And when he mentioned his obligation to both the Greek and the Barbarians....it meant everyone. Paul blew down cultural and social walls and put up a new sign that said "ALL ARE WELCOME."

I also read obligation a couple of ways:

Beholden: for the assistance, grace, and favor shown to him by both God and man....

Duty: It's his calling to do God's work, and his purpose to preach the Word.

Christen Barber (Luther)

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

Perhaps there is no need to choose between God's direction and the circumstances of life, since God works through everyday circumstances to carry out his will.

Doug Skinner (Phillips)

Amid all the ruins of her cities we find none of a hospital, none I believe of an orphan school in an age that made many orphans. The pious aspirations and efforts of individuals never seem to have touched the conscience of the people. Rome incarnate had no conscience.

George Jackson (Murray)

Jessica Miller (Stott)

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

Paul wanted to visit Rome badly and couldn't travel anywhere within the Roman empire without encountering Christians who were talking about what God was doing in Rome. He is homesick for Rome even though he had never been there. He wanted to visit

Rome as a stopover on his way to Spain. He had a lifelong dream to visit Spain because no one had laid a foundation there yet.

3 reasons Paul wanted to visit Rome:

- 1) He wanted to build them up and be a blessing and to **"impart some spiritual gift."**
- 2) He wanted to be **"encouraged together with them."** He wanted lodging, food, and fellowship with them on his way to Spain.
- 3) He also wanted to evangelize to Rome.

Paul's prayer life is intertwined with his life of service. **"Prayer first, preaching second."** His reasons for preaching was because he was under obligation, he was eager, and he was not ashamed.

Paul viewed himself as a debtor the whole world. He deliberately proclaimed that the gospel was for everyone. He did this because there were many Jewish believers who thought the gospel was not for the Gentiles.

My favorite quote from my book this week: **"Although the gospel is for everyone, there is a restriction placed on that universality. That restriction is faith."**

7 characteristics of Paul's prayers:

- 1) Prayer should be thankful
- 2) Prayer should be personal
- 3) Prayer should be continual
- 4) Prayer should be sincere
- 5) Prayer should be flexible
- 6) Prayer should be submissive
- 7) Prayer should be specific

Justin Harness (McGee)

As I'm reading this passage and the commentary by Wiersbe that coincides, I can't help but think about my shortcoming as a follower and one who should carry the gospel to all people. Wiersbe writes **"Paul felt an obligation to all men, just as we need to feel a burden for the whole world."**

How different would our community, our state, or our nation would look if we all had that burden? As I say that I look in the mirror at me first.

Jim Fleming (Moo)

While referring to Paul's acknowledgement of mutual encouragement in [Romans 1:12](#) (that the Romans "could contribute anything to his own Christian walk"), Moo notes, "Nevertheless, it is unparalleled in Paul's other letters."

Moo cites Luther's comment about Paul being hindered in preaching to the Romans in [Romans 1:13](#) with this nugget: "I have been burdened with a large number of places where preaching had to be done."

Non-Moo observations:

Paul started what appeared to be a numbered list ("First" in [Romans 1:8](#)), but never got around to a second.

I love how Paul prays for folks he doesn't know. I pray for lots of people I know well, but I struggle praying for those I don't know.

Paul seems very humble here—there's no sense of "I am Paul, hear me roar."

I also love how Paul doesn't see the preaching of the gospel as something that only unbelievers need. Believers need the gospel to be preached to them as well. God help us if we get too big for the gospel. We always need it and can scarcely get enough of it.

Julia Gregg (Schreiner)

This section is an expression of the apostolic commission with reference to the church at Rome.

2 themes: thanksgiving and prayer for a visit

Paul's thanksgiving is connected to his desire to visit Rome

Paul's mantra—Don't just win converts—strengthen and edify those believers already in Rome.

The gospel includes every aspect of Christian existence ([Phil 1:27](#))

Two quotes that were of special interest to me:

- What inspires and fortifies other believers is when they perceive faith in others. (p. 52)
- Preaching the gospel for Paul involved more than initial conversion—his goal . . . was to bring about obedience of faith among the Gentiles. (p. 53)

Julie Fleming (Keller)

Karrie Harness (MacArthur Bible Study)

An apostle did not start the church in Rome, but it was known throughout the world. To me this is a wonderful example of believers coming together to support, encourage and grow with one another.

To be known throughout the world, they either had to be really good or really bad (I'm going with good based on documented history ;)), but how/why were they so great?

Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers: Paul wanted the Roman Christians to know he was praying for them, and praying for an opportunity to visit them (I may find a way in the will of God to come to you).

"No wonder that they prospered so well when Paul always made mention of them in his prayers. Some churches would prosper better if some of you remembered them more in prayer." (Spurgeon)

Michelle Erickson (MacArthur)

The letter to Rome reveals that Paul not only had the zeal of a prophet, the mind of a teacher, and the determination of an apostle, but also the heart of a shepherd.

In verses 8-15 Paul's words suggest nine marks of true spiritual service: a thankful spirit (v. 8), a concerned spirit (v. 9-10a), a willing and submissive spirit (v. 10b), a loving spirit (v. 11), a humble spirit (v. 12), a fruitful spirit (v. 13), an obedient spirit (v. 14), an eager spirit (v. 15).

Paul's thankfulness was intimate, first of all because of his spiritual closeness to God. I thank my God, he declared. No pagan would have made such a statement, nor would have most Jews referred to God with a personal pronoun.

Some churches are famous because of their pastor, their architecture, their stain glass windows, or their size or wealth. The church in Rome was famous because of its faith.

Olivia Swint (MacArthur)

Rachel Samsel (McGee)

Sean McGarvey (Ironsides)

If someone could spoof Daughtry's "I'm Coming Home" with "I'm Coming, Rome" for Sunday, that would be spectacular!

Ironsides turns a virtual blindside to this passage. Two pages. He makes a point to dig on the Catholic church in this limited space:

"Both scripture and history are silent as to who founded the church in Rome. Certainly Peter did not. There is not the remotest reason for connecting his name with it. The boast of the Roman Catholic Church that it is founded on Peter as the rock and that the Roman Bishop is the successor of St. Peter is all the merest twaddle." (p. 20)

Merest Twaddle, by the way, makes a great name for a band.

On the "**from faith to faith**" of verse 17:

"It is really 'out of faith unto faith.' That is, on the principle of faith to those who have faith. In other words, it is not a doctrine of salvation by works, but a proclamation of salvation entirely on the faith principle. This had been declared to Habakkuk long centuries before when God said to the troubled prophet, '**The just shall live by faith.**' This is the text of the entire epistle, as we have already seen, and of Galatians and Hebrews likewise." (p. 21)

"Justification by faith alone is the test of orthodoxy. But no mind untaught by the Holy Spirit will ever receive it, for it sets the first man aside altogether as in the flesh and unprofitable in order that the Second Man, the Man of God's counsels, the Lord Jesus Christ, may alone be exalted." (p. 21)

Jesus is better. Not being on call this coming Sunday is also good.

Stephen Samsel (Stott)

Tim & Mila Archer (Maclaren)

Romans 1:11-12 Paul's Longings

I. There are 3 things to note:

- The manly expression of Christian affection
- The lofty consciousness of the purpose of their meeting
- The lowly sense that there was much to be received as well as much to be given

II. He "Paul" had never been in Rome when he wrote these words; he had no personal relations with the believers there...But still his heart went out towards them, and he was not ashamed to show it.

III. Now that expression "a spiritual gift" "in the New Testament has a variety of applications.

- Sometime it refers to what we call miraculous endowments
- Sometimes it refers to what we may call official capacity
 - But here it is evidently neither the one nor the other of these more limited and special things, but the general idea of a divine operation upon the human spirit which fills it with Christian graces "knowledge, faith, love".

IV. Lessons to take away

- First, no Christian teacher has any business to open his mouth, unless he is sure that he has received something to impart to men as a gift from the Divine Spirit.
- Second, received the gift that I have, under the limitations already spoken of, to bestow? There are some of you who have listened to my voice ever since you were children, "some of you, though not many, have heard it for well on to thirty years.

V. Apostle corrections

- If his language were not so transparently sincere, and springing from deep interest in the relationship between himself and these people, we should stat that it was exquisite courtesy and beautiful delicacy.
- But it moves in a region far more real than the region of courtesy, and it speaks the inmost truth about the conditions on which the Roman Christians should receive—viz. that they should also give.

VI. The impact...

- If you have ice in the pews, that brings down the temperature up here. It is hard to be fervid amidst people that are all but dead.
- He did not many works because of their unbelief
- Icy indifference, ill-natured interpretations, carping criticisms, swift forgetfulness of one's words, all these things kill the fervor of the pulpit
- ON the other hand, the true encouragement to give a man when he is trying to do God's will, to preach Christ's Gospel, is not to pat him on the back and say, "What a remarkable sermon that was of your! What a genius! What an orator!" not to go about praising it, but to come and say, "Thy words have led me to Christ, and from thee I have taken the gift of gifts."
- I may come to you ever more and more with the lofty and humbling consciousness that I have a message which Christ has given to me, and that you may come more and more receptive – not of my words, God forbid—but of Christ's truth.

VII. Debtors to all men

- "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." Romans 1:14.
- The indebtedness referred to is no peculiarity of the Apostolic order, but attaches to every believer. Every servant of Jesus Christ, who has received the truth for himself, has received it as a steward, and is, as such, indebted to God, from whom he got the trust, and to the men for whom he got it.

- Now, first, let me say that we Christians are debtors to all men by our common manhood.
- We are not sponges to absorb, but we are pipes placed in the spring, that we may give forth the precious water of life.
- That is the Christian truth that underlies the modern Socialistic idea, and, whatever the form in which it is ultimately brought into practice as the rule of mankind, the principle will triumph one day; and we are bound, as Christian men, to hasten the coming of its victory. We are debtors by reason of our common humanity.
- We are debtors by our possession of the universal salvation.
- Christ draws men to Himself for their own sakes, blessed be His name! but not for their own sakes only. He draws them to Himself, that they, in their turn, may draw others with whose hands theirs are linked, and so my swell the numbers of the flock that theirs gathers round the one Shepherd.
- So to all men we are bound, as much as in us is, to carry the Gospel. The distinction that is drawn so often by the people who never move a finger to help the heathen either at home or abroad, between the home and the foreign field of work, vanishes altogether when we stand at the true Christian standpoint.
- We are debtors by benefits received; the best thing that we can give is the thing that all of us can help to give—the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- We are debtors by injuries inflicted; is it Christian to impose our yoke on unwilling tribes who have as deep a love for independence as the proudest of us all, and as good a right to it. Brethren, we are debtors to all men. Let us do our best to influence national action in accordance with the brotherhood which has been revealed to us by the Elder Brother of us all...