

Why I Preach the Gospel

Sunday, March 21st, 1993

Romans 1:14-17

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

I'm going to bring a message today from the **Book of Romans**. If you have your Bible and would like to follow as I speak to you, turn in your Bible to **Romans Chapter One**. I will be speaking from **verses 14, 15, 16 and 17**. Now, here is the subject for today: "Why I Preach the Gospel."

Why am I in the ministry? This is what I am going to deal with. Why is this fellow here, in the ministry? Why do I pastor a church? Why have I preached on this television station for many, many years? Why do I leave home and travel to other places to preach? I will be going to another city this week, up North, preaching the gospel. What motivates me in this business of preaching the gospel? What motivates any true preacher of the gospel of Christ, to give his life, time and effort to studying, preparing messages and preaching the gospel? Why do I preach the gospel?

Let's see if I can give you four good reasons why I preach the gospel. I am turning to **Romans Chapter One, verses 14 through 17** and I believe that in these verses, that the apostle Paul answers all of the questions, "Why am I in the ministry? Why do I preach the gospel and why do I pastor a church. Why do I come up here and prepare these television tapes and why do I travel to other places?"

Why was Paul in the ministry? He said, "*God put me in the ministry.*" Why am I in this ministry? I believe Paul answers these questions better than I can. As I looked at this scripture and thought about this subject, I believe that his reasons for preaching the gospel are my reasons. I'm not trying to compare myself with the apostle Paul at all. I don't want to give that impression. What I am saying is the reasons he gave for being in the ministry are the reasons that I am in the ministry.

Here is the first reason: If you will look at verse 14, Paul said, "*I am a debtor, (I preach the gospel because I am a debtor). I'm a debtor to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; I am a debtor to the wise and the unwise.*" That's why I preach the gospel. I am a debtor and I am in debt.

Now, a debtor is a person who owes something. He owes someone something. He may owe money. If you owe a great deal of money, you are a debtor. He may owe obedience. A child owes obedience to a parent. A servant owes obedience and service to his master. A person may owe gratitude.

Paul, when he wrote to Philemon, he said, *"I would remind you that you owe me your life."* Paul preached the gospel to him and God used the message of Paul to reveal the gospel to the heart of this man. Paul said, *"You owe me your life;"* you owe me gratitude for coming your way with the gospel. A person may owe honor to another. We are supposed to *"Render honor to whom honor is due. Tribute to whom tribute is due, respect to whom respect is due."* God tells us, *"To owe no man anything but to love one another,"* so we owe a debt of love. A debtor is a person who owes another person, no matter what he owes him.

Paul is saying this, *"I'm a debtor."* I preach the gospel because I am a debtor. I am a debtor to the Father who chose me. He didn't have to. He chose me because He would. He chose me because He loved me, not because I loved Him, because He loves me. I am a debtor to God for His mercy to me, a sinner. *"I'm a debtor to Christ who loved me and gave Himself for me."* He came from heaven's glory and took upon Himself this robe of sinful flesh and died for my sins. I'm a debtor to Christ!

I'm a debtor to the Holy Spirit who called me, who came and regenerated me, and who called me from a spiritual grave. I'm a debtor to the prophets. There was Moses, David, Jeremiah and all those men whom God used. There were men who suffered and gave their lives to write the scriptures and to give us the gospel down through the years. I'm a debtor to the apostles.

Did you know that all the apostles were finally martyred, except one? John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos. The rest of them were cruelly murdered and martyred; they gave their lives to give us the Word of God. I know the Word is verbally and divinely inspired, but nevertheless, God did use these men. These men gave themselves to give us the gospel.

I'm a debtor to a faithful pastor who preached to me the gospel of grace. He came and preached to me. Phillip went to the Eunuch and Paul went to Lydia, the apostle Peter even went to Cornelius with the gospel. This man came to me with the gospel and I am a debtor. I will tell you this, since God has given me all that he has given me in Christ; I'm a debtor to share it with you and with all men. I'm to tell the good news, all around; I owe you that!

Here's an example: Suppose I lived in a dry, desert country, where there was no water. Suppose there were a lot of people living there in the same place. What if we were in a famine and a draught and had no water? If someone gave me a beautiful well, that was pumping water on my property, wouldn't you think out of gratitude and love that I would feel a responsibility to share it with my neighbors? God has literally given me in my soul and heart a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life. Like David said, *"I live in a dry and thirsty land."* So, this peace and this joy and grace that God has so freely given me, I am a debtor to share it with anyone and everyone who will listen to it. I'm not talking about my friends only, but everybody.

Look at **verse 14**, Paul says, *"I'm a debtor, both to the Greeks and the Barbarians."* The Greeks with all their philosophy and education, and the Barbarians, were poles apart. Paul said, *"I'm a debtor to all men, the Greeks, the learned and the unlearned, the wise and the unwise."* This gospel is the same gospel to everybody. It's not just for some men; it is for all men. *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of acceptance, by all men, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I'm chief."*

So, I am in the gospel ministry and I preach the gospel. Lord willing, I plan to keep preaching the gospel until He calls me away from here and to preach to all men, because I am a debtor. He said, "I am ready to preach the gospel." In **verse 15**, he says, *"I'm ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome, also."* Rome was a cruel city. It was a very hard, harsh and cruel city. It was city of soldiers and Caesars and martyred believers. Paul said, *"I'm ready to come down there and preach to you too."*

Not long ago, I was in Mexico preaching the gospel through translators and interpreters. We traveled over a mountain and we came to a village. I forget the name of it. It is north of Tuxtla in Chiapas. Up in the mountains, I guess four or five thousand feet, there is a man whose name is Pedro. Pedro is a tailor, who lives with his wife and two sons, in a little poor village, in the mountains. We stopped at his house and preached the gospel to him. I preached a sermon on **Psalm 23** with Pedro, his wife and two sons and one other person. There were six of us and I preached the gospel to them.

I'm ready to preach the gospel. Like Paul says, "I'm a debtor" to Pedro; I'm a debtor to you who are listening now. I'm a debtor to the folks in Ashland, where I have been a pastor for almost 42 years. I'm a debtor to preach the gospel and I am ready, God be willing, to preach the gospel wherever He will open the door. I'm talking about the true gospel, without compromise, boldly and plainly that men can understand.

That brings me to the **second** reason that Paul gives for being in the ministry. He says in **verse 16**, *"I preach the gospel because I am a debtor, I preach the gospel because I am*

not ashamed of the gospel.” I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. *“It is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

I know that the gospel of the cross of Christ is offensive to natural men. I realize that and I know that. The Bible says that. It says, *“To the Greeks it is foolishness”* and it is sheer nonsense. *“To the wise and to the religious people, it is a stumbling block, but to those who are saved (or being saved), it is the power and the wisdom of God.”* I know, that in this world, that what I am doing is foolishness. What I’m saying is nonsense to most people. That’s just so!

The story of creation by the hand of God is offensive. I could tell you some foolish theory that the world and the earth, men and animals came into being by some accident. I could say that one planet ran into another and people would believe that. They would like that. But, when I tell you the hand of God and the heart of God, according to the purpose of God, created all things as it pleased Him, that is offensive and foolishness to them.

There is the story of the fall of Adam, *“By one man sin entered this world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men.”* It is offensive how we became sinners, how our natures were changed, how our hearts were hardened, how we sinned against God, how judgment and condemnation came upon all men, according to the Bible. It is true, but it is offensive. I am not ashamed of it. I believe that God created the heavens and the earth. I believe that man was created in the image of God and he fell. He’s not evolving; he fell.

The blood sacrifices that were ordained by God, the way that man was suppose to come to God by a blood sacrifice; that is offensive. Cain showed us that right away. There, in the very early years after the fall, God said, *“Bring a lamb, bring a sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. It’s the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”* All of these blood sacrifices are a picture of God’s Lamb, Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins.

Immediately, the first two sons of Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden because of Adam and Eve’s sin. They came to God and Cain showed that it was offensive to him. He wasn’t going to come by the blood, so he brought some beautiful things that he had grown in his garden. He was just saying that the blood was offensive, that it was a stumbling block. I’m not ashamed of it. I’m not ashamed of the blood of Christ.

Let me show you this, the Bible clearly says that God chose Abraham and made of him a great nation. Through Abraham’s loins came Israel, the Jewish nation. They were God’s chosen people all the way through the Old Testament. Isn’t that correct? You know that

it is and I know that it is. *“To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* God said to Israel, *“The Lord thy God chose you; it pleased God to make you His people. The Lord didn’t choose you or set His love upon you because you were the most of all; you were the fewest of all.”* You were the smallest nation. When they went into Egypt, there were only 70 of them. God loved that nation. How did the world feel about that nation? The whole world hated that nation. They were all against them. They were alone, and why? The reason was because they were God’s people. The Hittites, the Amorites, the Phillistines, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and the Malachites despised Israel. You just name them. Every nation hated Israel because they were God’s people.

Our God has a covenant of grace now. *“There is a remnant according to the election of grace.”* I will tell you, every religion in the world hates grace. It hates free grace, sovereign grace, particular grace, effectual grace, and preventative grace; they just hate grace. They don’t hate works, but they hate grace. They hate true Israel. They are all aligned against true Israel.

God became a man, born of a virgin, walked this earth in perfect holiness. It is true, but it is offensive. Christ died on the cross. The Son of God went to the cross and he was nailed to the cross as our Substitute, our sin offering. *“He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was laid on Him; by His stripes we are healed.”*

“He died the just for the unjust to bring me to God.” I’m not ashamed of that! I was separated from God because of my sins. I was condemned by the law of God and condemned by the justice of God. Christ came down here and honored the law of God. He satisfied the justice of God and brought me to God. *“I’m accepted in the beloved.”* *I’m not ashamed of that!*

It is strange to me that men and women will follow the most ridiculous and religious practices without shame. Yet, they are ashamed of the grace of God. Isn’t that strange? They will follow the most ridiculous practices like down in Mexico. People will crawl on their knees; burn candles, and do all matter of physical exercises to get God to look with favor upon them and to forgive them. They are not ashamed of that; the whole world will do that. They will sacrifice a son or a daughter. They will throw them to Moloch in the fire. They will do all of these things and not be ashamed of it.

When God sends a Saviour, a Redeemer, by God’s own choice, ordination and appointment to come down here to fulfill the law, He meets it head on in the flesh. He identifies Himself with us, being numbered with the transgressors and obeying God’s law

that God might be just and justifier. He went to the cross and died and men are ashamed of that!

Men will make all manner of crosses. It is just superstition. They aren't ashamed to carry a rabbit's foot. They are not ashamed to put a horseshoe upside down on their barn; that is foolishness! That won't do you any good!

A little boy went to a baseball game with his father and the batter came up to the plate and the pitcher was ready to pitch. The batter stood there a minute, came up and "crossed" himself. The little boy said, "What did he do?" The daddy said; "He made a cross." The little boy said, "Will that make him hit the ball?" The daddy said, "It will help him if he is a good hitter; if he's not a good hitter, it's not going to help him." That is all that it amounts to.

Men and women will follow the most foolish, silly, superstitious, emotional traditions of religion. They will bow to another man and kiss his ring. I want you to tell me how, in the name of common sense, that Almighty God, sitting on a throne of justice is going to look down on me, bowing before another silly, fat man, and sees me kissing his ring? How is that going to put my sin away? How is that going to make my heart new or justify me before a Holy God? I would be ashamed to do that!

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. There is a reason for Christ hanging on a cross. There is no reason for me to be kissing a ring. There is a reason for Christ hanging on a cross but there is no reason for me to wear all manner of symbols. There is a reason for Christ hanging on the cross and suffering and dying and being buried and rising again as a Substitute. There is no reason for me to go to the "Holy Land" on a pilgrimage. It's not going to do me any good. It's not going to take away one sin from off of the Book of God against my soul. That has to be paid for by a Substitute. Why do I preach the gospel? I'm not ashamed. I would be ashamed to act like some of you folks do. I'd be ashamed of that. My, my, my!

The **third** reason I preach the gospel and I'm not ashamed of it is because "It is the power of God unto salvation." As our Representative, chosen by God, Jesus Christ came to this earth and by His obedience, He gave us a perfect righteousness and perfect atonement before a Holy God that enables that God to be just and justifier. That gospel is the power of God to honor the law. It is the power of God.

God's law is strong. God's law is condemning. I'll tell you how strong the law is. The Bible says, "*Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.*" Everybody listening to my voice, and looking into my eyes right

now, is a sinner. You have not honored the law of God perfectly and you have not obeyed it perfectly; you are under a curse and I am too, because of our sin.

It is going to take some real power to take away my sins and yours. I am thankful that, *"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation."* The gospel honors the law and satisfies God's justice. God said, *"The soul that sinneth shall die."* Just how are you going to get around that? You won't get around it. You have to die.

Well, I can get around it. You can too, if Christ died for us. He says, *"Because I live, you live. The gospel is the power of God."* It satisfies the law, and honors the justice of God. The gospel is the power of God to forgive sin; it puts away all sin. The gospel gives life to dead sinners. That is the power of God to raise the dead. It takes the power of God to give life to a dead man. Our Lord said, *"Those in the grave, shall hear My voice and come forth from life everlasting."* The gospel is the power of God to keep us from falling.

Listen, *"Abraham believed that God was able to do all that He had promised."* The Word of God says, *"He is able to save to the uttermost, them that come to God, by Him."* He is able and that takes power. The Word of God says that, *"He is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His throne and His presence with exceeding joy."* The Word of God says, *"He is able to raise our vile bodies and make them like His own."* That takes power! Do you see what I am saying? *"I'm not ashamed of the gospel because, it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."*

The gospel announces, *"A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."* How is that going to come to pass? The old heaven and the old earth are going to pass away where sin dwells, and *"There is going to be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."* Who is going to fix that up and who is going to do that? Who is going to create the new heaven and the new earth? Is it going to evolve? It looks to me like it is going backwards.

No, God says, *"I'll destroy this old earth and this old heaven with a burning heat and I'll create a new heaven and a new earth."* That is the power of God and that is because of Christ. *"It is the power of salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

Let me ask you a question, "If someone were to ask you what will keep a man out of heaven, what is the one thing that will keep a man out of heaven? What would you answer?" What will keep a man out of heaven? Who would you say? Would you say blaspheme? Saul of Tarsus said, *"I was a blasphemer."* God saved him and took him to

glory. Would you say adultery? When Rahab the harlot practiced prostitution; God took her to glory. That is what it says. Would you say murder? Well, David killed Uriah; he had him killed; that is murder. David is a man after God's own heart. Would you say divorce? The woman at the well was married five times. Would you say stealing or thievery? Well, Jacob stole his brother's birthright. He didn't just steal his favorite cup or his horse; he stole his birthright. God took him to glory. We're called the sons of Jacob.

Let me tell you the one thing that will keep a man out of the presence of God, and out of heaven. The answer is unbelief! *"I'm not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. To the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

Why, in scripture, does it talk about Israel not being able to enter the promise land? The reason is because of unbelief! Believe what? Believe the gospel, the gospel of Christ.

All right, here is the **fourth** reason and in closing: Why do I preach the gospel? I preach it because I am a debtor. I preach it because I am not ashamed of it. I am not ashamed of the gospel. It may be offensive to people around me, but not to me. I see it as the only way that God can be just and justify. It's the only way that this sinner can gain eternal life through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

I preach the gospel because, *"It is the power of God."* I can't make you whole, but God can. I can't forgive your sin, but God can. The church can't put away your sin, but God can. Not even hell will put away your sin, but God can through the blood of Christ.

I preach the gospel because; look at **verse 17**, *"Therein is the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel."* What is the gospel? The gospel is Christ crucified. The gospel is how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the scriptures, according to the Old Testament types and pictures in the scripture. There on the cross, hanging as the Son of God, He reveals the love of God. In His death, He reveals the justice of God, He reveals the righteousness and holiness of God; *"God spared not His own Son."*

I will tell you this, the birth and life and death of Jesus Christ reveals the righteousness and holiness which God requires of you and me, which God in Christ provided for you and me and God in Christ accepts for you and me. *"Christ died for our sins,"* and therefore, God can love us and accept us and receive us because Christ, in our stead, honored God's law and satisfied God's justice.

What God requires, only God can perform. What God provides in Christ, God will accept. “Preacher, do you believe that God will accept what Christ did on that cross?” If God sent Him, God will accept Him. If God provided Him, God will accept Him.

I will tell you, in **verse 17**, it says, *“This righteousness is revealed from one degree of faith to another, because the just live by faith.”*