

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 3

I. Exposition of Chapter One (Continued).

A. Verses 8-17 – Paul’s Introduction.

1. **Note: In verses 14-16, we have three “I ams” of Paul.**
 - a. **“I am a debtor...” – verse 14.**
 - b. **“I am ready to preach the Gospel...” – verse 15.**
 - c. **“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ...” – verse 16.**
2. **Verse 14 – “I am a debtor...”.** The meaning of the word **“debtor”** is, **“One held by some obligation”; “bound by duty.”**
 - a. **Our only debt (obligation, duty) to the world is to love them and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them. (cf. Romans 13:8).**
 - b. **“Greeks”** - This referred to the civilized, cultured people around the Mediterranean Sea. Alexander the Great and his followers had Hellenized the known world. The Romans had taken over and assimilated the Greek culture.
 - c. **“Barbarians”** - This word refers to the uneducated or uncultured people groups, usually to the north. It was used of people who did not speak Greek.
 - d. **“...both to the wise and the unwise.”** - It is possible that this is parallel “to Greeks and to barbarians,” but not necessarily so. This may be another way of referring to all people groups and individuals.¹
3. **Verse 15 – “So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”**
 - a. The word **“ready”** here is a very strong word. **It denotes a willingness, a predisposition and an inclination. It means to be eager (and prompt) to be of service. It also includes the idea of being passionate. (cf. Word Study Dictionary)**

“If one has the finest intellectual and formal preparation for preaching but is lacking in zeal, he cannot hope for much success.”²

4. **Verses 16-17 – These two verses are considered the theme of the entire Book of Romans.**
 - a. **Verse 16 – “For I am not ashamed...”** – The word **“ashamed”** is associated with being afraid, feeling shame which prevents one from doing something, a reluctance to say or something because of fear of humiliation, experiencing a lack of courage to stand up for something or feeling shame because of what has been done.³
 - 1) When you consider what Paul had gone through already, this fact of him not being ashamed is even more powerful. He was not ashamed even though he had been imprisoned in Philippi, chased out of Thessalonica, smuggled out of Damascus and Berea, laughed at in Athens, considered a fool in Corinth, and declared a blasphemer and lawbreaker in Jerusalem. And, he was stoned and left for dead at Lystra.

“I am a part of the fellowship of the Unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit Power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, chintzy giving, and dwarfed goals. I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by presence, learn by faith, love by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power. My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is Heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my Guide is reliable, my mission is clear.

¹Robert James Utley, *The Gospel according to Paul: Romans*, vol. Volume 5, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 1998).

²Everett F. Harrison "Romans." In *Romans-Galatians*. Vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. 12 vols. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976.) 18.

³http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_116-19

I cannot be bought, compromised, deterred, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, back up, let up, or shut up until I've preached up, prayed up, paid up, stored up, and stayed up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go until He returns, give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He comes. "And when He comes to get His own, He will have no problem recognizing me. My colors will be clear for 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..'"

**Christian "T shirts" with the logo "FOTU" (Fellowship of the Unashamed).
Reported to have been written by Bob Moorehead)**

- b. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because he knew it was **"...the power of God to salvation..."** (cf. **I Corinthians 2:4**).
 - 1) The word **"power"** is the Greek word **"dunamis"** which means; **"inherent power residing in a thing by nature of its nature"; "miraculous power"** – **Thayer's Lexicon**.
 - 2) The Gospel is the good news of salvation energized by the Holy Spirit. Marvin Vincent states that **"dunamis"** is **"Not merely a powerful means in God's hands, but in itself a divine energy."**⁴ (cf. **Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:31-33; 8:4-8; 11:19-24**)
- c. **"...for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."** – The Gospel is not to the Jew first in point of importance but in point of time. It came to them before it came to us. This is simply stating that the Gospel is powerful toward everyone when they release faith in it!
- d. Verse 17 – **"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"**
 - 1) **"...the righteousness of God..."** – This is the first time the word **"righteousness"** is found in this epistle. As previously mentioned, this is the theme of Romans.
 - 2) **Basic Definitions: (Note: The words "Righteousness" and "Justification" are the same in the Greek.)**
 - a) The state of him who is as he ought to be, the condition acceptable to God. (Thayer's)
 - b) A legal declaration of acquittal. Being declared innocent in the sight of God.
 - c) To be in right standing with God.
 - d) The ability to stand in God's Presence without a sense of guilt or condemnation.
 - e) **"Since God Himself is the standard of the believers, the righteousness of God means the righteousness which belongs to God or to oneself from God, or God-like righteousness."** – **Word Study Dictionary**
 - 3) **There are Two Aspects to Righteousness by Faith.**
 - a) **Judicial Righteousness** – This is the Righteousness Imputed to the Believer. **I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21.**
 - b) **Experiential Righteousness** – This is the Righteous Living which comes as a result of Imputed Righteousness.

"Righteousness is a characteristic of God, freely given to sinful mankind through Christ. It is

1. a decree of God
2. a gift of God
3. an act of Christ

But it is also a process of becoming righteous that must be vigorously and steadfastly pursued; it will one day be consummated at the Second Coming. Fellowship with God is restored at salvation, but progresses throughout life to become a face-to-face encounter at death or the Parousia!"⁵

⁴Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 9.

⁵Robert James Utley, *The Gospel according to Paul: Romans*, vol. Volume 5, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 1998)

- 4) **“...is revealed from faith to faith...”**
- a) The word **“revealed”** means; **“to remove a veil or covering exposing to open view what was before hidden. To make manifest or reveal a thing previously secret or unknown.”** – **Word Study Dictionary**
 - b) **“...from faith to faith...”** - Literally, the words can be translated **“out of faith into faith.”** This new life in Christ begins out of faith and is lived out daily by faith. Faith then is pictured as one's all in all, both in the beginning and in the progress of one's Christian life.
 - c) **“...as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”** – This is a quote from **Habakkuk 2:4.**