

**Romans 1:9-11**  
**We Serve God in our Spirit**

Romans chapter 1 beginning verse 8:

- 8) First, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ on behalf of all of you, that your faith is being spoken of in the whole world.**
- 9) For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always upon the occasion of my prayers,**
- 10) making petition if, how now at length, I might have a prosperous journey in the will of God to come to you.**
- 11) For I long (or *desire*) to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, in the end (that is, *the goal*) you might be established;**
- 12) that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith (that is, *the faith among ourselves*) both of you and of me.**
- 13) Now I do not intend for you to be ignorant, brethren, that often times (or *many times*) I purposed to come to you, but was let hitherto...**

The word *let* means *hindered*. And the term *hitherto* has to do with *in this*. “In this effort to come to them,” he says, “I was hindered.”

- ...I wanted to come in order that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.**
- 14) I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unperceptive,**
- 15) so as much as according to me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.**
- 16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is *the* power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**
- 17) For this is the righteousness of God is being revealed from faith to faith (that is, *from out of faith toward faith*) as it has been written, “The just (or *righteous person*) shall live from out of faith.”**

That is your literal translation. There are three parts to the introduction in the book of Romans. We saw in verses 1 through 7 the first part of the introduction, the first part of three, that Paul introduced himself as a slave, a **δοῦλος** (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ. His calling was that of an apostle. His Consecration was that he was set apart for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We saw in verse two, the promises. That God had chosen instruments, that is, *the prophets*; chosen communication, that is, *in the Scriptures* God would communicate; and the chosen creed, it would be *the gospel of Jesus Christ*.

The pedigree in verses 3 and 4. First all the Lord's humanity, that He came through the seed of David that He might fulfill all the human requirements. Secondly His deity, that He had been declared Son of God when He rose up from the dead. And then His identity. Finally he identifies this Son of God, that this is the Son of God Jesus Christ our Lord. So that He fulfilled all human and spiritual requirements.

Fourthly, the provision of God in verse 5, that through God he and the other apostles received grace and apostleship. And we spent much time in that studying how everything is provided for us and given to us by God's grace and through God's grace. It is never by merit. It is never by labor. It is always by God's grace. And he says we have received grace and apostleship in order to function as an apostle. This is for obedience of faith. Through faith we obey. And we know that faith is a gift from God. Secondly, among all the Gentiles (or *nations*) on behalf of His name and representation of His name.

We saw our position in verse 6. We ourselves are called of Jesus Christ. Everybody who is genuinely born of the Spirit of God and saved is so because of the calling of God. The term *calling* has do with invitation. The Lord called us. We responded. We are the called of Jesus Christ. We are the saints by calling. To be a *saint* means *to be set apart*. We are not saints because of our character, we are saints because of our faith.

The people we saw in verse 7. That he wrote to those who were believing, in Rome. He was not preaching to unsaved people. He was teaching the saved just like he is doing to us. And there are two adjectives that describe all Christians in Rome:

- 1) First of all, *beloved of God*. The word *beloved* means to be *the objects of God's love*. All Christians are said to be the object of God's love.
- 2) Secondly, we are *called saints*. That is, we are saints by calling. It denotes not just the invitation but also the acceptance of the invitation. We have responded.

Then his preface in verse 7. **Grace and peace to you.** The same preface in all thirteen of Paul's letters. He is giving the greeting to both the Jews and the Gentiles. *Grace* is for the Gentile greeting, and *peace* (shalom) for the Jews. It shows that he is writing to a mixed group and all of this is communicated to us. **Grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

But here we have the second section, verses 8 through 15.

Romans chapter 1 verse 8, first of all he says, **I give thanks to my God.** We are in this section that represents and expresses Paul's concern, his personal concern for the people. And that number one, he praises or he is pleased, he expresses his pleasing of them. First, **I give**

**thanks to my God through Jesus Christ - it is always through Christ - on behalf of you, that your faith is being spoken of throughout the entire world.**

Last week we spent time on sharing that it was not their good works, it was not their social events, it was not anything about them that Paul gave thanks for other than their faith. *Faith* is our testimony. We either trust the Lord or we do not. He is not talking about *saving faith*, that is one aspect. It is trusting the Lord in one's life through and in difficult situations and circumstances. They did not proclaim in the whole inhabitable world at the time their faith, their faith was being spoken of. It was by other people, as an encouragement to other Christians.

He says in verse 9, **For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always upon the occasion of my prayers.** So first he expresses himself that he is pleased with them. He gives praise to God, he gives thanks to God because of their faith. And people have heard about their faith. And all of those in positions of leadership, that is what should please people in leadership is when people trust the Lord. People follow the Lord. But also in his prayers, he says, *God is my witness*. He calls upon God to be the one who testifies on his behalf.

And then he says, concerning God - he still has not gotten to the main theme here, **For God is my witness whom I serve in my spirit.** All service to Christ takes place in our spirit, not our flesh.

In Philippians chapter 3 verse 3 Paul says that we are those who are of the circumcision - that is Jews - but also circumcised of heart. But he says, "And we have no confidence in the flesh, and we worship God in spirit." No confidence in the flesh whatsoever. Christianity is not the flesh. Christianity is not even human. Our relationship with Christ is spiritual. So how we feel, or how we evaluate things means nothing as we look at things from a human perspective. It is what God tells us in His word and I have to believe by faith He is telling us the truth. Because most of the time it goes against all human wisdom, counsel and philosophy. **Whom I serve in my spirit.**

Paul says in Romans chapter 7 verse 18 that in his flesh is no good thing. The word *good* is pertaining to the spiritual things of God. Because we all know that there is some good human things in our flesh. There are some things that we can do well. Our flesh is even nice sometimes. But service to Christ takes place in the spirit, not in the flesh. Our confidence, we worship God in spirit and we have no confidence in the flesh. And yet how much confidence we place in the flesh in the human realm.

He says, **For God is my witness whom I serve in my spirit, specifically, in the gospel of His Son.** That is very interesting the way it is worded. The gospel is not something about Jesus Christ, He is the gospel. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Does it include information about Him? Yes. His teachings? Yes. But the center is not the teachings, the center is not even the Bible, it is about Jesus Christ. He is the good news. Who He is, what He did for me, and what He did for you is the good news.

**Whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always upon the occasion of my prayers.** Two phrases there that show the consistency and faithfulness of Paul. First of all he says, *without ceasing*. That does not mean he is praying twenty-four hours a day seven days a week, it means he does not leave off from praying.

I Thessalonians chapter 5 verses 17 and 18 tell us that in all things give thanks, in all things pray. Pray without ceasing for it is God's will you give thanks for all things. So do not leave off from praying. Paul says, **Without ceasing I make mention of you** (here is the second phrase) **always**. He is consistent. He is faithful. That upon the occasion of his prayers, that is, whenever he prays he always remembers them. He always thanks God for them.

But not only does he thank God for them in verse 8, but when he prays he makes request, as we will see in verse 10, about a prosperous journey to them.

Verse 10 it says, **Making petition**. Not *request* but *petition*. In the King James Bible *prayer* is prayer in general. But supplications - if you come across the word *supplications* those are *petitions*, those are specific things to pray about. And that is the word used here: *making petition*. Without ceasing I am remembering you always upon the occasion of my prayer; continually making petition about a specific thing. **If, how now at length, I might have a prosperous journey in the will of God to come to you.**

He had been hindered. We are told in I Thessalonians chapter 2 that he wanted to make it to Rome but he was hindered by Satan. We are also told in the book of Acts chapter 16 that he wanted to make it to Rome but God stopped him, God hindered him. When Paul mentions that Satan hindered him he does not say it in a sense that it is wrong, he presents it in a sense that God has allowed Satan to do this because the Lord did not want him to go.

Even while writing this letter at the end of his third and final missionary journey, he still had not seen Rome. None of the people there were saved under his ministry. Some of these people went to Jerusalem for Pentecost. If you remember in Acts chapter 2 verse 10 that some of them were from Rome that heard the gospel message that day, went back, shared the gospel with others.

There are now small groups of Christians meeting in Rome but not too publicly because persecution has begun. The Christians would not only meet but they would live in the caves underneath the city. And the soldiers, Roman soldier would not even dare to go down there to get them and so they just let the Christians go. The Christians they did find - I mean if you were walking down the road a group of Roman soldiers can come up and say to you, "Let me hear your allegiance to Caesar." And if you are Christian and you professed your allegiance to Christ they would capture you, put you in prison, beat you, feed you to the lions, feed you to wild dogs in front of all the people as a means of entertainment. Or even crucify you upside down, or have you nailed to a pole in Nero's garden and set on fire to keep his garden lit at night. So it was not exactly an open public assembly there.

But it is kind of interesting, Paul expresses that he has always had a desire to go to Rome - the political center of the world at the time - but he was hindered in so many different directions from going. Obviously God did not want him to go. And obviously God, when God did want him to go He was going to send Paul in a way that Paul himself would never choose. He finally did make it to Rome but he made it to Rome as a prisoner. Acts chapters 27 and 28 tell us about this time in Rome where he would lose his life.

So he is making request. He is now in Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey, and he says, **How that I might have a prosperous journey.** The word *prosperous* and *journey* (the word *road*) go together in the Greek text. "That I might have a good trip," basically is what it is saying. For him *a good trip* means *to arrive*. Because if you were to book a reservation on the transportation means that Paul was using - first of all you want to walk up and you want to check the log and see who is registered; if Paul is on there, you want to take another means because when he took a ship it always crashed, wrecked. Or when he went into town he was always beat up or persecuted in some way. You did not want to be around the guy. So if he is on board ship you want to wait for another ship even if you have to wait through the winter for another ship because you know it is going to sink somewhere along the line. Paul knew, and said that persecution followed him wherever he went. So a prosperous journey is making the journey in the end.

But notice he says at the end of verse 10, **Having a prosperous journey in the will of God**, literal translation. No matter what Paul wanted to do, no matter what his desire, he always submitted to and submitted it to the will of God. As God wills. He had a desire to go and so God stopped him on several occasions, because He did not want him to go. How does God show us? I mean we have a desire, how do we know that God has not placed that desire there? He shows us in many ways what He would have us to do. **So I am praying**, the petition in verse 10 is, **that I might have a prosperous journey in the will of God to come to you.**

Then his passion in verse 11. **For I long to see you, in order that I might impart unto you some spiritual gift, in the end (or the goal would be) that you might be established.** His passion and desire was to come and be with believers in order to accomplish three things according to this text. We will get into the introduction of it today.

**I have a desire to see you**, purpose clause, **in order that I might impart unto you some spiritual gift.** The word *gift* in the text is the word **χάρισμα** (charisma), where we get the term *charismatic* from. There are a few words in the Greek language that express a gift. Each one expresses a different kind of gift. A **χάρισμα** (charisma) is **χάρις** (charis), grace, in action. Technically speaking - and those of you that are have studied in the Greek class, **-μα** nouns of the third declension - that is, nouns that end in **-μα**, **χάρισμα** (charisma), you can hear it in the word - they express action. Grace in action is **χάρισμα** (charisma). **χάρις** (charis) with the **-μα** ending on it.

The word *gift* in the Scriptures denotes that this expression of grace is something that comes from God and not from man. That is what the gift is supposed to express in English translation. Unfortunately *gift* means several things to us in the English language and it is a very general word if you don't get specific about it. But basically a *gift*, a spiritual gift **χάρισμα**

(charisma) is God expressing by His Spirit some expression of grace in some way to us when we fellowship together.

You have heard of the **χάρισμα** (charisma), the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians chapter 12. These are the capacities and the abilities, the different ways in which the Holy Spirit ministers. Every time the Holy Spirit ministers He is ministering God's grace. His favor. It is not because we deserve it but it is Him having favor on us. And so *gift* makes it sound like God is giving something to us. Well, that is not the word that is used in the New Testament for God giving the gift to us.

As a matter of fact, that word is specifically associated with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the only gift that God gives to us personally. God does not give me a gift for me to exercise and express for myself, that is not even the Bible. God's gift to me is His Holy Spirit. His Holy Spirit has the capacities and abilities to express God's grace in different ways through the believer. Not one way, the Holy Spirit is not limited to one way. "Well, you are a right arm, so I cannot express my left arm through you." God's Spirit can minister whatever He wishes through a believer at any given time, but it is a gift. It something that comes from God's Spirit not from us, therefore it is called a gift. But not *a gift that is given to us*. It is a gift that comes to us and through us as a gift. And he says it is a spiritual gift, that this expression of grace is derived or comes from God's Spirit. It is spiritual. It is not human. So his passion was to come to that to them, **in order that I might impart some spiritual gift**. That is that God's grace would minister through me to you when I am there.

And look at the purpose at the end of verse 11. The purpose for imparting some spiritual gift to them is for their establishment. That is, that they would become confident in trusting the Lord. Ephesians chapter 4 Paul talked about those believers who are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, blown all over the place. The younger believer who is not established in the word of God does not really understand those spiritual truths that would make them established. In fact, we get our word *steroids* from this word for *established* and it has to do with *putting somebody in cement, making something strong*. So he says, **That that I might impart some spiritual expression of grace to you**, the end result is, **that it would be for your establishment**. Your maturity.

So notice - and we will get into the other two next week. Notice, **For I desire to see you in order that I might impart some spiritual gift to you for your establishment**. That is number one: for the establishment of the believer. Number two in verse 12, **And this is for us to be comforted together**. That does not mean sit around and put their arms around each other and comfort them. This had a comforting effect of the flow of God's faith from him to them and them to him. Very interesting study. And then thirdly, at the end of verse 13, **that I might have some fruit amongst you also according as also the rest of the Gentiles**.

- 1) To establish people in the things of the Lord.
- 2) That it would be the Ministry of God's Spirit from him to them and from them to him. It would not be human.

3) And that it would bring the production of fruit.

Now the Bible specifically uses the term *fruit*. It talks about *works* also. But when Paul specifically and pointedly uses the word *fruit* he is talking about that which is produced by God's Spirit. God's Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. It is not a person's work, it is the fruit of God's Spirit.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7, **By their fruit you shall know them.** In other words we are told that it is wrong to judge people but it is not wrong to be a fruit inspector, to check the fruit.

"Hey, I am an apple tree."

"Why do you have plums hanging there then if you are an apple tree?"

You know, it is by their fruit you shall know them. It is not what they produce as a human being but what God's Spirit produces in them and through them. It is not who you are as a human being. It is who lives inside of you. And as you become established in the things of Christ, does God's Spirit bear fruit in you and through you as evidenced by all?

So Paul talked about this, imparting some spiritual gift. And we will get into this in detail next week as we finish out this particular section. The third and final section is in verses 16 and 17, that is the third and final section of the introduction to the book.

Let's close with prayer.