

Title: Are You concerned About Others

Text: Romans 1:8-15

(1A) We are studying the book of Romans. We began our study last week. And we are in the introduction to this ~~wonderful~~ ^{Now, want to} book. I remind you that the book of Romans deals with two key words. The word "righteousness" and the word "faith." It is a righteousness by faith. Not a righteousness in and of ourselves. But a declared position that we have because we believed the Gospel ^{of God}.

Now, take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 1. I want to begin, this morning, where we left off last Sunday. Romans chapter 1 Verse 8.

(Read 1:8-15)

Prayer

(1B) Last Sunday, in verses 1 thru 7 we looked at the Character of the Gospel ^{Jesus as the Gospel}

(2B) Now, beginning with verse 8 we find Paul's Great Concern for others. Or, why He really wanted to preach the Gospel. ^{Has Concern for others} I thought about entitling this sermon: WHY PREACH WHEN NO ONE LISTENS? Well, anyway, in these verses we find the reason why we should preach the Gospel, or why we should be concerned about others. So, let's look at these verses. I want to share with you two ways in which we see the concern of Paul. Two principles which ought to be part of our concern for others.

(1C) First of all, in the prayers that Paul makes. (2C) And secondly, in the purposes that he states as to his desire to come to them.

(10) Now, in regards to his prayers, I would like you to notice, first of all in Vs 8, "his rejoicing!" He is ^{Thankful} thankful for something. Paul usually begins his request that way. He is thankful unto the Lord for something. He says, "FIRST" meaning: "Primarily". ~~And~~ First on my schedule of things "I want to thank my God for you all. Because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."

Now, is that true for false.....Obviously it is true. It is the word of God. But, think of the whole world...WHAT IS PAUL REFERRING TO?...That one church, a group of believers in Rome, their faith was spread through the whole world. ~~What is that referring to?~~

~~Well, it is referring to the Roman empire.~~ ^{Based} Well, that is referring to the inhabitable world that the Roman empire knew. It was referring to the Roman empire. And Paul is saying, "Hay, I am really praising God that all over the empire your faith is spread abroad." That is exciting. That one little group of believers could be knows throughout the empire.

^{Now what is the point?} Our witness should not stop here, friends. It shouldn't stop in ~~Texas~~, or, ^{Alabama} for that matter in California. It should extend throughout the world. As people go from this place to other parts of the country. In my limited travels I am amazed as I meet people who have had a contact with this church. And now they are off serving Christ in another location, in another church. The faith should always be spreading out. Our church should be considered a bases of operation. And there is no reason why we can't reach our world for Jesus Christ.

(20) Secondly, The Apostle Paul gives us his request in Verese 9 and 10. And there are ^{Two} three things that I want you to see about his request that give us some idea of the motivation of this man. *which should change our motivation*

(16) First, notice, that Paul's request and prayer life was based upon sincerit. In Vs 9 Paul says "God is my witness."

Now, was his sincerety being challenged? Probably so. Because everywhere he went they questioned whether he was an apostle or not.

But his point here is that the final evaluation rest with the Lord. He is going to tell these people whom he has never seen that he loves them and that he wants to come and see them.

Now, for a moment, put yourself in shoes of Paul. And suppose you are thinking right now about a church in Africa. Or a church in South American. And you are writting them a letter and you say in that letter, "I have never seen you, but I love you with all my heart and I can't wait to come and see you"

Now, what would they think?..."Well, maybe you are a little cracked. Maybe there is something wrong with ~~you~~. We don't know ~~you~~!"

Paul says, "God is my witness." He will evaluate the truthfulness of what I am telling you. That I really love you and I want to come to see you.

~~Are we sincere in your prayers? Are we concerned about other~~
(2f) The second thing I notice about his prayer life is that it is based on faithfulness. In Vs 9 Paul says "whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son."

SUMMARY

The word "serve" is one of those great words. You know, in the O.T. when the High Priest came into the Temple with the sacrifice, he was doing service unto the Lord. And ~~in the Greek O.T.~~ the word they used to discribe that service is the word Paul takes and uses here in Romans 1. He uses the same word in Romans 12:1 when he says "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the merci of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual sarvice of worship."

In other words, we are all Priest. The Bible calls all believers "Priest". God has called us into the kingdom of Priest. Peter says that believers are a royal priesthood. ^{So,} Everyone of us is a Priest. ^{Therefore,} We can go directly to God. The Bible tells us that. And in that, we are doing service just like the Priest of the O.T.

But, here is the catch, friends. The Bible says that our bodies ^{should be} offered as a living sacrifice on the altar of God. And that is what is our spiritual service.

So, when Paul says "I am serving God. I serve in my spirit in the gospel". He is indicating the sacrifice on His part of his own right as the Priest, as the sacrifice, as the whole ball of wax, ^{is} the worship of the temple itself, it all wrips up with one man who said, "Listen, I am giving it everything I have got." *That is committed. Do we give to the Lord all that we got?*

And Notice, he said in the spirit. Not in the flesh. That is a big problem among believers. ^{Paul says} We do things in the energy of our own strength. Rather than trusting God. I am serving, both with my life as it has been laid on the altar before God, my life as a priest to minister to God, himself, and Him to me in this wonderful close relationship. ^{May White} And to others... ^{Paul says} ~~This whole~~ ^{Life} thing is just one big service to God. And I am doing it in the Spirit.

This faithfulness is also indicated at the end of Vs 9 in the word "unceasingly". "Unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers."

Now, what does it mean to pray without ceasing? Paul says "I pray for you always without ceasing." Does that mean that every waking moment of the day He was praying?.....No!

The word, here, simple means "do not stop." Suppose that you have been praying for someone for three months and then you stop. And then a couple of months later you run into them and you say, (Hypocritical) I HAVE BEEN PRAYING FOR YOU.....Now, wait a minute, two months ago you stopped praying for them. But back then you prayed for them.

Paul's point is: "I haven't left off or stopped praying. I am continuing to remember you folks in prayer."

You know, I have found that it is a whole different ball game when you ~~try~~ try to minister to people whom you have been praying for. If you can look somebody in the eye and you know that you have been praying for them, it is a whole new ball game. There is a tremendous relationship, regardless of how they have been treating you. Because you begin to see God work in your life and you are excited to see how God is going to work in their life.....Pray for people....

In understanding Paul's concern to preach the Gospel we see his faithfulness in praying for people. ^{PRAYING FOR THE LOST} And that is very, very important. ^{are we concerned about others? Then Pray for them}

(3E) Third, I notice his request was based upon a personal desire to visit THEM. Now, you may want to do something for God. But you must get down to specifics. Paul said "I want to come to you. And minister to you." Vs 10 "always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you."

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Now, he could be referring to the fact that he would like a nice boat ride over to Rome. I mean, quite seas, a nice prosperous journey and get there safely.

But I have looked at this several ways. And I am not sure He is saying that. The word means "a good way." Throughout this passage Paul is telling them that it is part of my efforts to come to you, but God has not allowed it so far. And I am making a request that somehow by any means I might have a good way to get to you.

Well, what would it be to have a good way?.. Well, in contrast to a bad way it means that the will of God would be involved. He didn't want to come if it was not God's will. And that is what he is saying at the end of Vs 10. "By the will of God." I want God to show me that this is what he wants me to do.....

(30) O.K. let's come now to his reasons. What were His reasons? *2 Reasons for Pray* Vs 11-12 (Paul)

(16) First of all, he tells ~~us~~ ^{us} that the reason why he is praying to come to them is for the ministry of his spiritual gift. "That I may impart some spiritual gift to you."

Now, we are living in a day when churches of every brand name are talking about "spiritual gifts." That is good. We need to know about them. But I have found in all of this discussion, people are really wanting to know what their gift is, rather than, desiring to minister..... *Then gift*

Paul is saying, "I want to come to you so that I can impart a spiritual gift to you."

By the way, this is the only place in the N.T. where the word "spiritual" is found with the word "gift." The only place.

You say, well, I thought it was mentioned in I Cor. 12 where it says: "Spiritual ~~gifts~~ gifts."....The word "gift" is not there. It just says ~~concerning~~ "concerning spiritual things"....Of course in content he is talking about gifts. But this is the only place where mentions "spiritual" with the word "gift."

Now, what does he say he wants to do with it? He says he wants to "impart it."

Now, there is a real personal application here for everyone of us. Each believer has a spiritual gift. And we are to impart it.

What does it mean to impart it? I mean, how do you give away that which you have? The word means "to give with". And it is always the idea of sharing To give with someone else. You cannot exercise your gift apart from another believer. You must minister to another believer, *to impart your gift.*

You can set ~~her~~ ^{her} and listen for most of your Christian days and never do anything. And you can say you have a spiritual gift. But, friends, the Bible says that you must give it. You must use it with someone else. It is a ministry that you impart to other believers.

Now, I have ask myself the question many times: Is that in a group or is that with individuals?

Now, really, we are sitting here listening to a message. We have the teaching of God's Word as God has instructed us to. Can we have the ministry of Spiritual gifts? I think only in the sense if I am imparting the gift of teaching. That is all. And ~~it~~ ^{it} may be ~~and~~ ^{and} it may not be. I may be teaching God's Word. But it may not be the spiritual gift exercised. You have to discern that.

So, you really can't, in this big group, you can't really have the ministry of spiritual gifts... *operating*

So, What is the Bible referring to then?....I firmly believe that it is dealing with the ministry of one to one. Or, maybe one to two or three. But it is a small contact with people.... WHY?.....

Let's take the gift of showing mercy which is compassion to the sick... You must go to the sick one. And impart ~~the~~ compassion to them. And bring them the comfort of God's Word.

Suppose you have the gift of exhortation. Which is ~~encouraging or~~ encouraging another believer. If you are doing that, you are doing that to them personally. Maybe over a cup of coffee, or out to lunch, or at work, or what ever, but you are ministering personally to them. Maybe you can do that ~~after~~ after the service out there in the church lawn with someone who has a broken heart and you take a few minutes to share with them.

When the Bible talks about imparting your spiritual gift it is talking about the believer, outside of the public gathering ^{at work} as they are actively ministering one to another. And by the way, that should be going on all the time. You should be doing that every day of your life. ^{All you concerned} ~~Paul wanted to impart~~
about others - IF SO, impart your spiritual gift
~~to them some spiritual gift.~~

(2E) Now, secondly, not only his ministry of spiritual gift, but I would like to notice the motivation behind this. What was the motivation? Two things. ~~And~~ you ask yourself...as a believer: is this my motivation in ministering to other believers? Is this what I want to see done?

(1E) Number one, in Vs 11, Paul say "that you maybe established." Now, the word "establish" means "to fix something firmly in place." It means "giving stability". So, if you love another believer and you want to minister to them, what are you trying to do? You are trying to fix them firmly in place so that they are not wavering or not going off on side trips, or being tossed about by every wind of doctrine. They are firm, established in the Lord.

Do you want to see your friends established? That was Paul's motivation.

(2F) The second thing involved here is found in Vs 12. He says "that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith."

In other words, encouragement. And this comes out to be one to the other.

Example Have you ever ministered to another believer and shared with them and you come away wandering who minister to whom?.....I have done that so many times.. I have gone into a hospital room to minister ~~to~~ a patient. And I have come away walking on cloud 10. I have been minister to. It is wonderful.

Self Friends, That is what Paul is saying here, you see. We will both be comforted. It happens that way. You see, you never share as a believer, but that you also willn't receive in return. And it is a beautiful thing.

(2C) Now, let's come to Vs 13-15. Here is the heart dealing with the purposes of Paul in ^{His Purpose} preaching the Gospel. And Paul is saying three things concerning his purposes. *which I hope will become your purpose*

(1D) First, he mentions his ^{near} purpose in coming to them. Vs 13 says "I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented thus far) in order that I might obtain some fruit."

His reason in preaching the gospel and coming to them is to bear fruit.

But in that he tells us that often he was prevented. He is saying that God many times has stopped me. He has prevented me from doing what I wanted to do.

Have you ever found that true in your life? Of course, many times.

Things that we want to do, but we are prevented from doing them. God stops us.

I want to tell you, knowing the history of Paul's missionary journeys, I am glad that God stopped Paul from going to Rome. Because he went to Corinth."

And after that he had a tremendous ministry for God.

You see, God often stops you from doing what you think you ought to do.

Because he has a greater minister for you. And if you don't have that kind of insight, you need to open your eyes. God prevents us, he stops us because in his will he has something better for us.

So, at least be thankful at that moment for what you know is not God will, and then move on to see what his will is.

Now, he also says in Vs 13 that the main thing that was driving him to come to them was to bear fruit.

Now, I have heard a lot of sermons about bearing fruit and I have ask myself the question: IS THIS TALKING ABOUT WINNING PEOPLE TO CHRIST, OR IS THIS TALKING ABOUT THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Well, without exceptions, I have discovered that when Paul uses the word "fruit" he is dealing with winning people to Christ. "That I may obtain some fruit among you, and among the rest of the Gentiles."

Let me ask you christian: ARE YOU BEARING FRUIT? Jesus said: "You have not choosen me. I have choosen you to go forth and bear fruit."

Listen, we are ^{called} to bear fruit. What kind? What is the fruit. Well, there is the fruit of the Spirit, true. ^{and} But, Paul is saying that the fruit is people who are wone to Christ.

And Paul is telling them why he feels called to preach the gospel. And it is the reason why we should want to preach the gospel...WHY?....Well, first of all, so that we can bear fruit.

(20) Now, secondly, I would like you to notice, our responsibility to all people in Vs 14.

Why should we feel so responsible?....Paul says "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish."

Paul says in Romans 13:8: "owe no man anything, but to love one another." We do have a debt to love one another. We owe it to Jesus. Jesus paid it all, the song writer wrote. "All to him I owe."

I am a debtor. Do you believe that you are a debtor? The Bible teaches it. We are all under obligation to share the gospel. Jesus said to all of us, "go into the world and preach the gospel and make disciples." That is our responsibility. *Dear Friend* People do you really understand why God saved you?

(3) Then, third, in Vs 15, I would like you to notice Paul's eagerness to ~~preach~~ preach the gospel. He says, Vs 15, "Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome."

The word 'eager' means "excited". Paul is saying I am excited, I am ready" I am eager to preach the gospel. I don't care who it is. Greek or barbarian....wise or foolish...I am eager to share the gospel of God which is Jesus.

Are you eager, Christian? Will you go to work tomorrow and witness? Will you share the gospel with a non-believer?

I want to close with the first phrase of Vs 16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

Now, friends, the only thing that I can conclude from that is this: if you do not feel your obligation to all men, if you do not feel the need to share the gospel of Christ with anyone at anytime, then there is only one conclusion that we can come to: IN SOME SENSE WE ARE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL. In some sense we are embarrassed ~~but~~ about God's love ~~and~~, or God's saving grace. *The Reason is* Maybe we have not sense God's love in our life. And thus there is no concern on our part to witness...

Maybe you need to get right with God this morning.

Rededicate your life - give God your whole life - or maybe you

*just plain need to get saved - Receive Christ as your Saviour
In this church - are we concerned about others
Shall we pray*