

[Romans 1:14 – 20]

~ Paul's goal in life was to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in the capital city of Rome, Italy; the center of the known-world at that time. The goal of our Spiritual Safari is to teach the entire Word of God to the entire world! Our safari shares Paul's enthusiasm and expectation of teaching the Bible, friends. Those who are sincere about the sound doctrine of the apostles being taught properly, correctly and completely to a lost and dying world crippled by sin deeply desire to get involved in that endeavor. The average Christian plays social media church, posting disconnected verses with fractured thoughts from time to time; but they're never really interested in discussing Christ. They never seem to reach the place where they are qualified to discuss the Bible as God would have them discuss it – intelligently. I see very few concerned with or striving to continue to teach Holy Writ to another generation; and even fewer getting involved in supporting this ministry.

The tragic reality of our current hour is that only an extreme minority genuinely care about perfecting the cause of Christ Scripturally. Sloppy ministries with a personal agenda abound and thrive, but they don't reach anyone for Christ. It is abundantly self-evident in society that the contemporary church isn't communicating the Gospel message of Jesus effectively to the lost world. I know they have a message; and I know it includes a "Jesus," but it's not the Jesus of the Bible. No, their Jesus is a liberal Jesus of whom there is no record. Their Jesus offers no opinion on sin. Well, they may fool entire communities – sometimes nations – and they fool themselves; but God laughs at them in derision.

The average person looking into church membership today is concerned with one thing: what God will do for them – period. They aren't interested in His will for their lives; they only want to tell Him their will and how He can help them help themselves. They never get around to obeying His commands or what He would have them do *IF – IF – IF* they truly loved Him; and they never get around to that because they never come to Him as a sinner! The church doesn't teach truth any longer. They promise blessing

and healing; and espouse one can start with God as a petitioner or by some good work. No mention of sin, except to foolishly dismiss it as unworthy of thoughtful consideration.

The condition of the church throughout the world is beyond tragic; it's positively shameful. We are debtors to God until every man, woman and child on this earth has heard the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, friends. So, we continue on in our safari introduction of Paul's introduction in verses one through seventeen of chapter one in his epistle to the Romans, and we pick up at verse fourteen. This is where the apostle becomes extremely personal. In this report, we will consider Paul's great three "*I am's*" – and number one is "*I am debtor...*" ~

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

~ The Barbarians Paul is speaking about are your ancestors and my ancestors. Those who were beyond the boundary of the known world; comprising the Roman Empire in the day in which we are studying. So, how did Paul get into debt with people he had never met and didn't even know closely? Well, Paul hadn't run up a huge bar tab at some Greek restaurant and then skipped out. Paul had not sent to Rome for designer neck ties and then disputed his credit card charges. No, Paul had no transaction with these people whatsoever; but he had had a transaction with the Lord Jesus Christ!

Because the grace of God had been so bountifully bestowed upon him in that transaction, he considered himself in debt – *NOT* to God – but to every man, woman and child on the face of this lost and dying earth. You and I will count ourselves indebted this way if we love the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. There are many places around the globe that are completely closed to the Gospel of Christ. As Christians – we should be ashamed of our complete failure in conveying Scripture properly, correctly and completely to the places it *IS* available to. So, don't tell me you have paid your debts, friends; because, you haven't....

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

~ Not only was Paul a debtor, but he was also ready to pay! Paul was the master of his purpose; but not his circumstance. Well, friends, I can totally relate to that predicament. Paul was eager to teach the Word of God; unfortunately, I just do not see an enthusiasm and anticipation amongst believers today. I see a misleading menagerie of random Bible theories around this social media forum on which I teach; and it is positively shameful....

16 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.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

~ These two verses are the keys to this epistle. The Gospel “of Christ” is not found in our better manuscripts and “...of Christ” should be omitted. Paul says “I am a debtor,” he says “I am ready” and he says, “I am not ashamed.” Stating that he was a debtor is admission; saying he was ready is remission; and saying he was not ashamed is submission. These are CRITICAL doctrinal points to comprehend if you really want to process conversation in the Word of God. Those were the three missions of Paul.

If you walk down the streets of Ephesus, you’ll see the ruins of elaborate marble temples; but no church was built in the first century! One of the Seven Wonders of the World – the temple of Artemis, Diana – was at Ephesus – but no church. And if you visit the ruins of the seven churches in Asia, you’ll also see the ruins of gorgeous temples there, too. Paul knew the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ had power; and that power was divine energy. The most striking feature is that, in and of itself, has an innate power! Teaching the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ holds power through the Spirit of God. It held power in Paul’s day, and it has power today! It is the power of God unto salvation. No temple ever had anything even moderately close to the power of the Holy Spirit.

His power being manifest in the world is the end effect of teaching the Gospel. Salvation is the all-inclusive terminology of the Gospel of Christ. Salvation simply means deliverance! Everything from justification to glorification is wrapped up in salvation. It is simultaneously an act and a process. All three statements are equally true: I have been saved – I am being saved – and I shall be saved. That conclusion embraces everyone in the human race, irrespective of racial or religious barriers. It is extremely personal in that it is directed to every individual. Whosoever will may come is the sincere, legitimate and genuine offer Jesus extends. At the same time, this universal scope is limited to believers. Election and free will become an alloy in this statement. The only possible way to procure salvation is by faith. To the Jew first but also to the Greek.

This order does *not* mean the Jew receives priority, however. In this case, it is a chronological statement. The Gospel went first to the Jew. If you had been in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, you would have noticed it was a one hundred percent Jewish meeting. Paul and Barnabus both said it was necessary that this must first have been spoken to the Jews. The Jews turned and rejected it, thereby judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life. So, Paul and Barnabus turned to teaching Gentiles! I think we should all think about that carefully and turn it over in our minds a few times. That's when the Gospel went from Jerusalem to Judaea – and on to the ends of the earth!

Dr. Stiffler calls attention to three pertinent truths: **(1)** The effect of the Gospel is salvation. **(2)** The extent of the Gospel is world-wide and **(3)** The condition of the Gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! What we have is actually “*a*” righteousness – not *HIS* righteousness; because to have His righteousness would require He share His glory; and that will never happen – so it is “*a*” righteousness in Christ being given directly by God our Father. It is not a righteousness of man, either, of course; as God has already said He would not accept any righteousness of man. We have an imputed righteousness God gives when He places a believer in His Son. Only then does God acknowledge us on *ANY* level. Only *then* can a man be accepted; and further, only because of what Christ has done for us are we accepted! The only method of procuring said righteousness is by faith in Christ – there

is no other way. You can't work for it – you can't buy it – you can't steal it, and you can't manufacture it; you will come by faith, or you will not come to Christ.

Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith ~

So, again, we have “a” righteousness provided that can only be imparted to us by God Himself. The Greek word is “*dikaioisune*,” and occurs ninety-two times in the New Testament. Thirty-six of those times is in Romans; and the phrase “*the righteousness from God*” occurs eight times. The root word “*dikai*” simply means “*right*.” It implies “*justice*” and also “*to justify*.” To be *RIGHT* is the primary meaning. It is also the antonym of sin; because sin, by de facto, implies we are wrong, friends. We just happen to *all* be wrong, too, by the way! Dr. Kramer gives a very apt definition: *righteousness is the state given by God which stands the test of His judgment!* Righteousness is the character and acts of a man approved of by Him; in virtue of which the man corresponds with Him and His will as an ideal and standard! Righteousness is what God demands and it is what God provides! Our responsibility is to lay hold of these truths, in Holy Writ.

“*Revealed from faith to faith*” in verse seventeen means God saves us by faith, we live by faith, we die in faith, and we’ll be in Heaven by faith! “*As it is written*” in this verse is quoted by Paul from Habakkuk chapter two verse four. It is a phrase repeated in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. Justification by faith means the sinner is pardoned because Christ died for their sins, and it also means we stand complete in Christ when we trust Him as our Savior. This is the subtraction of our sins and the addition of righteousness to our lives. Both must happen to constitute a genuine conversion. Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification. He is the only way we will ever stand before God.

The act of justification is not an arbitrary decision God makes, either. God never disregards His Holiness or justice. God saves by grace because there is no merit in us. Only trusting Christ’s death on the cross can bring us to salvation. Justification includes the fact that God doesn’t slip sinners into

Heaven through the back door in the dark of night. God doesn't accept bribes or promises. Our justification rests exclusively on our faith in His resurrection! Jesus paid it all – all to Him I owe – sin had left a crimson stain – He washed as white as snow. If that isn't your song, too – then you may want to have a long talk with Jesus today....

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

~ Alright, this is where we enter a new section of Romans; one which deals with the wrath of God against unrighteousness. We begin with a revelation of sin in verse eighteen; and it runs through the twentieth verse of the third chapter. This is what has been called "sinner-ama!" These passages establish a premise of unequivocal universal fact. That fact is: man is a sinner.

The ecumenical church movement is *ALWAYS* away from God – *never* towards meeting around the Person of Christ Jesus. We have an axiom of Scriptural truth that this world is guilty before God, and all need the righteousness we considered in the first part of this report. Paul never attempts to prove man is a sinner. He merely states it as fact. If you disagree with that premise, my suggestion is: close your Bible, place it in the garbage can, and go do something else. This section of Scripture reveals both the revelation of righteousness from God and the revelation of the wrath of God against the sin of man!

If we sincerely desire to know how wonderful salvation really is, then we have to know how bad sin really is in God's eyes. Sin is the measure of salvation. The wrath of God is *NOT* the punishment of God – it is His feeling of Holy anger. Wrath is the antithesis of righteousness, and it is used in verse eighteen as a correlative. This is God's answer to those who feel the Old Testament only presents a God of wrath and the New Testament only presents a God of love, by the way! There is a continuous revelation of the wrath of God; both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This is God's constant and unending displeasure with evil. God is only lenient with the sinner because Christ died for them. The Gospel has *NOT* changed God's attitude towards sin, friends. Sinful man will either have the

righteousness of God, or the wrath of God – and both are revealed from Heaven. We can see it in every segment of society today, too!

If you want to know how bad sin is, just look at the disease and war going around the world today. Those two examples are succinct of within and without. Personal and public. You won't get by with sin, my beloved. Ungodliness is that which denies the character of God. *ALL* who disregard the existence of God will experience the wrath of God, sooner or later. That is the state of man God absolutely hates – when man denies and refuses to recognize Him – which is the only unpardonable sin, by the way.

Unrighteousness is against man; sin and ungodliness is against God. Unrighteousness is a denial of the authority of God, and it is an action within the soul. The man who gets drunk and takes his car out on the freeway, breaks every traffic law we have, and ultimately kills someone, commits unrighteousness because his offence is against man. The same is true for the fraudulent businessman; and the wrath of God is revealed against those people. God says vengeance is His, and that He will repay. They hold down the truth and repress it; but not forever. We may not see their judgment but, God usually permits us to know about it. Either way, we can rest knowing the Lord will avenge in justice....

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

~ Our limited understanding of the universe we live in reveals two things about God: His Persona and His power. They are immutable truths that have been around since the time the world was created. So, the question is: how can the invisible things of God be clearly seen? Paul made this paradox purposefully. Creation is as clear as it can possibly be! Creation is a primary revelation God gave us. The Psalmist says he considered *THY* Heavens and the work of *THY* fingers; the moon and the stars which *THOU* hast ordained. The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His

handiwork. Creation reveals an unchangeable eternal existence, power and deity of God Almighty! There is an innate sense within man which is capable of comprehending an instinctive knowledge of God! That is only obtained by praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment. God Himself said He has set eternity in our hearts. I understand these are tremendously difficult doctrinal issues to grasp and accept; but we must deal with them in order to understand Paul's epistle to the Romans.

The most pathetic and ridiculous state of mankind is unbelief in God. It reveals a closed-minded individual who is living a woeful lie of hypocrisy. Unbelievers become very upset when others worship God or study the Bible. If they honestly believed God doesn't exist, why do they care about denying Christians the right to believe? Atheism is the most illogical, simple-minded and senseless – stupid, frankly – theory any man can subscribe to. When a person forms a theory concerning something he doesn't believe exists in the first place, that man is diagnosed with a classic case of paranoid schizophrenia. It's scientific. It's medically defined. The fool hath said in his heart there is no God, friends – and the word fool means insane. Psalms repeats that phrase twice. It is truly sad how some are so blinded by sin and Satan that they cannot see what we are teaching here.

Well, we didn't get very far in our expedition through the entire Word of God in this report; but we are searching for the Lord Jesus on every page of Scripture, and attempting to teach the entire Word of God to the entire world – which requires much time and incredible effort. In our next report, we'll continue forward in this rich and beautiful epistle from the apostle Paul ~