

The Apostle Paul is Under Obligation

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[0 : 00] Again, our Father, we address you as we come to the Word of God because we desire to know more than anything else for this next hour what this Word that you have communicated to the Romans through Paul is really saying and what it is saying to us today by way of application.

We are so grateful for all your marvelous provision, none of which we deserve, and yet it is because of who and what you are that you have provided us with matchless benefits and gracious provisions.

And so often we turn a deaf ear to what the Lord hath said. Make us this morning hour, we pray, to be a people who are obedient and attentive to your Word, who long for the truth that is conveyed here in this epistle, and then grant us that we may be equally diligent not only to be hearers, but to be doers of this Word.

For only in that way can we glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through these lives that you have given us. To this end we commit our study and our examination and our intake of the Word in Jesus' name.

Amen. This epistle to the Romans was written by Paul around 56 to 58 A.D., or approximately 25 years after the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 41] Apparently Paul wrote this letter while he was a guest at the home of a man named Gaius, who is mentioned in Romans 16 and verse 23.

And this individual Gaius lived in the city of Corinth, and Paul was there for several months, and while he was there teaching the Word to the people in Corinth, he wrote this particular epistle to the church that was in Rome.

Paul speaks of Gaius as being his host, and he says, and also the host of all the brethren, or the host of all the church. And this probably means that Gaius was a rather well-to-do individual who owned a large home, and because he had space available, the congregation, if you want to call it that, at Corinth met in the home of Gaius, because in the early days of New Testament churchianity and Christianity, we did not have church buildings or edifices established for that specific meeting.

They simply met in one another's homes, and Gaius was such a home. Paul was indebted to him for his hospitality, and he acknowledges the graciousness of his host when he closes out the Roman epistle.

The book of Romans is unique in a number of ways. First of all, it was never visited nor established by Paul or any of the other apostles, and it is the only church that Paul wrote to without having been there first.

[3 : 19] All of the other epistles that Paul has written were written to churches that he personally had established or visited. Romans was an exception.

We do not know for sure how the body of believers began there at Rome. It is entirely possible that in accordance with Acts chapter 2, when the long list of individuals were given and the places from which they came, that those who were from Rome are there identified.

They are spoken of as strangers from Rome. They were there on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. They saw the miraculous manifestation, the speaking in the foreign languages, which they themselves did not learn and had not had available to them up to that time.

They saw the miraculous manifestations, and these people being there just for the Feast of Pentecost would, of course, then return to their hometown, and in the case of the Romans, they may well have been among some of the 3,000 who believed on the day of Pentecost.

They took the message of Jesus Christ back with them to Rome, and there they began propagating salvation through Jesus Christ, and a body of believers grew, was established, and so on, and then Paul is writing this epistle to them.

[4 : 37] The book of Romans deals more comprehensively with the subject of Jew and Gentile and their respective futures more than any other book in the New Testament.

This is very important. This is tremendously important that you understand the distinct plan that God has in the Word as it relates to Jew and non-Jew.

A failure to make that distinction will reduce the Bible to a hopeless hodgepodge of religious misinformation. You just cannot make head nor tail out of it if you do not mark out the careful distinctions.

Also, the book of Romans is the most comprehensive doctrinal treatise of all the New Testament writings. I am thankful that we do not have to do without the other New Testament books, but I think it has been aptly stated by a great Bible scholar of another generation that if the Christian church today had nothing available to it but the book of Romans, in Romans alone, it would be adequately outfitted.

That is, we have covered within the book of Romans all of the major doctrines, most of the minor doctrines that are found in the New Testament. It is, therefore, the most complete or comprehensive of all the New Testament writings.

[6 : 05] And the theme of the book of Romans is the righteousness of God. It is a treatise, if you will.

It is like a lawyer's brief that sets forth a case for the prosecution. And God is the judge, as it were, and Paul is the prosecuting attorney, and mankind is the defendant.

The world is on trial. Romans has been spoken of as a courtroom drama, and it certainly does fit many of the characteristics. It is just as though, if you could vision with your mind's eye, God is on the throne, Paul the apostle is the prosecution for the state, if you will, God as being the state, and you and I who make up the world are the defendant.

We are placed on trial. That is exactly how he pursues the theme throughout the book of Romans. The righteousness of God is set forth as being God's absolute moral standard, and it also sets forth man's miserable failure to measure up to God's standard, and it thirdly sets forth God's provision in Christ.

Romans says that man is undone. He is unclean. All have sinned and come short of God's glory. He is therefore under condemnation. He is under the wrath of God.

[7 : 37] There is nothing he can do to deliver himself. Man's state is terrible. He is bogged down in a quagmire called sin, and there is no way, no way by which he can extricate himself.

He is hopelessly, eternally lost. That is the picture of the human race in the book of Romans. But it doesn't stop there. You know, God's righteousness is like you've heard all of the bad news, good news jokes that have been going around for several months.

Well, this is a bad news, good news situation too. But I can assure you it is not a joke. It is dead serious. The bad news is man is lost.

Man is irretrievably lost insofar as his own efforts are concerned. The good news is God realized that man is unable to deliver himself and that man is unable to make himself acceptable to God.

And the good news is the gospel that God in the person of Christ stepped in to the arena of humanity and there he became our personal sacrifice and he paid the sin debt that was due from us and that God is satisfied with the debt that is paid and there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

[9 : 02] That's the good news. That's the gospel. And that is set forth so clearly. And he comes to the great result or the conclusion the climax in verse 17 that the just shall live by faith.

That is it is only the man who has been made just or righteous through his faith in Jesus Christ that shall ultimately live.

Who is the man who has eternal life? It is the man who has been made just through faith or righteous through faith. In verse 1 of this great epistle Paul identifies himself.

He says that he has a servile spirit. He is a slave of Jesus Christ. Also he tells us that his authority is his apostleship.

He is an apostle of Jesus Christ and he tells us that his mission centers in the gospel of God which is identified as the good news.

[10 : 07] Verse 2 deals with the origin of the gospel. Paul says, Listen, I want you there at Rome to understand that this gospel which I proclaim is not something new.

This is not of recent origin. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not something that I dreamed up. This isn't my idea. It is something which was promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures.

It is New Testament truth that is true. Christ died for the ungodly. New Testament truth but it is based on Old Testament promise. And that which was culminated in the death of Christ was that which also has been prepared in the mind of God and promised by God from centuries past.

The prophets spoke of this. Habakkuk spoke of it. The just shall live by faith. So Paul gives the origin of his gospel. He said it is promised by the prophets in the Old Testament.

And verse 3 reveals the heart of the gospel. This gospel concerns God's Son. And we ought to go on record right here as we have in the past and that is there is no true good news from God that does not concern His Son Jesus Christ.

[11 : 27] God doesn't have any good news to communicate that does not come through Jesus Christ. That's very narrow. It's very hard-nosed. That is exactly where we plan to be.

That's where we are without apology. It is all summed up in Jesus Christ. He is everything or He is nothing. He is not one among many. He is the only one.

He is the true vine and the only vine. He is the true truth and the only truth. He is the true way and the only way. And this means to the exclusion of all others. If our Christianity is not sum and substance based upon Jesus Christ then it's nothing.

It's nothing more than another great world religion which is what many try to make it out to be. Concerning God's Son insofar as human flesh is concerned He is a direct descendant of King David.

and this is very important. We looked at the genealogy of our Lord which we will not take time to do this morning but to the Jewish mind at least it was essential that this Messiah be a direct descendant of David the King to whom and through whom the promises were given.

[12 : 40] And Paul says he qualifies he fits the bill on that score he is the son of David and insofar as his deity is concerned he was declared or proven to be the son of God through the power by which he was raised from the dead and that is set forth in verse 4 according to the flesh that is after the manner of man he is the son of David according to the spirit of holiness that is after his deity he is the son of God with power and we find here amalgamated within this one person Jesus Christ our Lord a hypostatic union whereby God and man are one in the flesh or one in the person of Christ whereby he is not half God and half man he is all God and all man and he is total deity and total humanity embraced in the person of Christ the provision of Christ is outlined in verse 5

Paul says it is by this Christ that we have received grace and apostleship and that simply means that in the order in which they are given here grace precedes apostleship Paul was not material for apostleship until he had first received grace that is the order and notice if you will the purpose of grace and apostleship is to bring about the obedience obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his namesake and that is a very important concept because here Paul is saying listen this is the whole rationale for my apostleship this is why God called me and made me to be an apostle it wasn't my idea I was antichrist I wasn't the least bit interested in serving Jesus in fact all I wanted to do was put to death those who did serve him this wasn't my idea God called me by his grace and he made me an apostle and the reason he did so was that I might bring to the obedience of faith the Gentiles because Paul's ministry while not limited strictly to the Gentiles was concerned primarily with the Gentiles he did minister to the Jews as you well know from reading the book of Acts and this word obedience is really one of the key concepts of the Christian life that today many people have rejected entirely we are on in case you did not know it we are on a human rights kick today everybody is screaming about their rights but you know something nobody is saying anything about their responsibilities the society of man has a tendency to go from one extreme to the other and right now we are on a big rights kick everybody has their rights and this is the thing that is being championed and noised abroad

I don't care if it is women's groups or minority groups or majority groups or whatever everybody is screaming about rights but you cannot have rights without responsibilities and nobody is saying anything about that and that is one of our big problems today this word obedience that is tied in with the idea of responsibility is very key and very germane and someone has aptly said and I think it is true that the essence of the Christian life is obedience to the revealed will of God I cannot argue with that the word the word obedience in the in the Greek is hupo well the way it is here in our text actually is with an alpha hupo ko mean and it comes from a compound word in the

Greek that is let me just anglicize it hupo which means under hupo means under actually it is this word here from which it comes and the ko main comes from the other word that actually is akouo and it means to hear this is the word from which we get the word acoustics obedience I do better in Greek than I do English and to put the words together obedience literally means to hear under and it has the idea of placing yourself under the authority of another to whom you give a hearing it means listening to those who are in authority over you it means to place yourself under the subjection of another person whom you will hear this is exactly the concept conveyed in Ephesians 6 1 where Paul says children obey your parents in the

Lord it means place yourself under the hearing of your parents and listen to them can you think of any day in our generation when this is more needed than today when so many young people are convinced that mom and dad don't have anything to say that's worth listening to the word of God says children are to obey their parents in the Lord place themselves under the hearing of their parents and that is exactly what parents are supposed to do in relationship to God you know the chief responsibility of the creature is to have a submissive willing spirit toward his creator you have no greater responsibility than that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever and to do that you must place yourself under

[19 : 51] God's authority and there is no way that you can enjoy this God if you will not glorify this God and there is no way that you can glorify God unless you place yourself in subjection to his hearing Paul realized when he set out on his ministry Paul realized 2000 years ago that he was called upon to minister to people who lived on a planet of rebellion and we are still living on a planet that is in rebellion today that is the whole thrust of his ministry it is to proclaim this gospel so that when men believe the gospel and are saved they place themselves in a position of willing servitude at least theoretically now this doesn't mean that all Christians are willing servants of God far from it but it does mean that until you come to a place where you have submitted to God's authority in Christ you are not even in a position you do not even have the potential of really being submissive as a creature to this creator until you have a relationship with Jesus

Christ in a personal way you are not potential at all for doing God's will once you are a Christian you have the potential then you do not have to and many do not exercise that potential Paul says this is the whole sum and substance of my ministry this is why God has called me to apostleship because man has gone astray he is a rebel a rebel creature against the God who made him and each new generation of people simply perpetuate the syndrome and the gospel invades humanity and calls out some people by the grace of Christ and there are some who are salvaged from that planet of rebellion and these individuals are the ones who place themselves under the hearing and are in subjection to the authority of God that's his whole crux of his ministry here Paul was called to be an apostle because people in the world have gone haywire and they're still haywire and may I say to a certain degree you and I have the same kind of calling that Paul did but it has to start with us because there is no way that we can bring anybody else under this obedience if we are not obedient to it this is where the

Christian church gets bogged down many of us many of us who are potential for placing ourselves in subjection to God's authority have not realized that potential the psalmist said teach me thy way teach me your precepts teach me your will and then renew a right heart in me and then I will teach transgressors your way the work stop starts here someone said the buck stops here too it has to begin with me parents have no right they have no right to expect their children to be submissive to them if the parents are not submissive to God and I'll tell you something else they won't be either they won't be if our children do not sense that we have placed ourselves under the authority of God and his word as a creature and we are in every way subject to him if our children sense that this is not true then they are going to follow the example we have set and they are not going to respond to our authority either now that's the way it works so where does it begin begins with parents creaturely obedience and submission to the creator is what life is really all about few people know that and the world has such a distorted concept that the world thinks what life is all about is doing what you want to do you see they take the principles that God has set forth and they warp them and twist them and distort them and turn them around and all you need to do in the main there are some exceptions the very few but in the main all you need to do is determine what the values and ideas and and goals are of the average worldling and then look at the opposite of them and that's usually where you'll find

God discovering the will of God and doing it is the most fulfilling experience any human being can have but only a tiny handful believe that and out of those who believe it there is even a tinier handful who do it and what's the result you can never know fulfillment you can never know true happiness you can never know true peace you can never know true serenity of soul you can never enjoy the abundant life or have life to its ultimate fulfillment you'll never know that until you are where God wants you to be and what God wants you to be and then you're in position for fantastic blessings and fantastic benefit and tremendous fulfillment that is life on the highest plane that is what Jesus was talking about when he said

I came to provide something for man that he doesn't have life abundant life abundant life not mediocre not humdrum not ho-hum abundant life and you show me a Christian who isn't really enjoying life I mean really enjoying what God has provided for them and I'll show you someone who is somewhere to one degree or another out of step with some principle that God has set forth designed for their blessing that's just the way it works when you go God's way and travel his route you get the benefits and you get the predictable results when you ignore it you get the results and the consequences of that it's as simple as ABC whatever a man sows that's what he's going to read works for Christians as well as non Christians and it's wonderful that

[26 : 45] God has given us these principles because they're predictable nobody needs to grope around in the dark you go God's way you get God's results go your own way you get a big mess now we can all speak from experience can't we this preacher sure can I've lived there long enough to know and it ain't no fun the world is passing away and also its lusts but the one who does the will of God abides forever 1st John 2 17 so that's the thrust of apostleship Paul says in verse 6 that you also at Rome fit this category as do all other Gentiles that is I am called of Christ and you are also called of Jesus Christ and he further describes them as being beloved of God and that is a term that is used in the scriptures for believers only God loves the world John 3 16 and other passages make that abundantly clear

God loves the world but only those who are related to him through Jesus Christ are spoken of as the beloved of God it is a kind of love that the world does not know they are beloved of God you are beloved of God and we are called saints these Romans were called saints in verse 7 we are saints today we are saints because we are called of God we are not saints because we behave saintly that is the world concept anybody that the world considers a saint is somebody that you at least ought to be able to see a halo over their head when they are standing in the dark it should glow in the dark if you are a saint that means you are just perfect if you are a saint that means you never lose your temper you never lie you never become angry you never become difficult to live with you are always even handed you are always just a wonderful pleasant perfect individual and this individual is called a saint that is not the biblical definition of a saint and I sure am glad there wouldn't be any saints here just all aint a saint is someone who has been taken by

God and set apart from the world for Jesus Christ that is a saint it is one who has been sanctified or separated it has nothing let me say this with all the clarity I can muster it has nothing to do with your behavior nothing sainthood is not determined by acting saintly all who are saints are supposed to have an acceptable level of behavior that the world cannot attain to I'm not saying that if we are saints that behavior doesn't make any difference of course it does when we become saints we are provided with a divine dynamic the person of the

Holy Spirit that allows us and equips us and enables us to live a life that is acceptable to God and every Christian ought to be living that kind of life but that does not make you a saint these Romans were saints and you are saints if you know Jesus Christ you have been separated by God for Jesus Christ and that makes you a saint you say well what if I don't act saintly well most of us don't at least not consistently one brother says you mean if you are a saint and you are separated by God for Jesus Christ then you can just sin all you want to and you're still a saint sin more than I want to and I'm still a saint wouldn't it be nice if you never sinned any more than you wanted to wouldn't that be great every Christian that I know of who sins sins more than he wants to if

I could just bring my sins into line where the only time I ever sinned was just when I wanted to that would be great but I sin when I want to I sin when I don't want to it just really comes easy for me and you know something I am still a saint because this is determined by my relationship with Jesus Christ and all that the father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out you must divorce the idea of behavior you did not get into this business of Christianity based on your behavior and you won't be kicked out for behavior once you become a Christian there are all kinds of things that you ought to do and should do because you are a Christian not in order to become or maintain your Christianity but that is beside the point so no one is talking about a life of license or loose living or anything else besides

[32 : 27] I have never met I have never yet met a true born again Christian who said that he had a desire to just go out never met a Christian like that because when you come to know Jesus Christ your desires are brought into conformity with his will so that whereas before you were not all that concerned about being displeasing to Jesus Christ now all of a sudden it becomes very important to you and I want to tell you one of the concepts one of the basic requirements of loving someone is that you want to love and anybody who claims to love Jesus Christ and is not interested in what pleases Jesus Christ is kidding themselves there's no way they can love him any husband who says he loves his wife and isn't interested in pleasing his wife is kidding himself he doesn't love her he can say he does talks cheap any wife who loves her husband wants to please her husband any child who really loves his parents wants to please his parents now we may not always succeed we're not always consistent sometimes we lose sight of that and we want to please ourselves more than we want to do anything else but the desire ought to be there to want to please and someone who says

I know Jesus Christ is my Savior have no interest or desire in pleasing him at all all I want to do is please myself get out of here I don't believe you don't have to believe you don't have to believe you the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men teaching us teaching us that denying worldly lusts we should live soberly and righteously in this present world and if the grace of God is in you the grace of God will teach you and if it hasn't taught you it's because it isn't in you notice if you will this grace and peace in verse seven comes from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ that is jointly and it's beautiful that the way this is constructed in the Greek it indicates that the grace and the peace that comes from God our father also equally from the source comes from

Jesus Christ and what this means is you cannot have grace and peace from God without having grace and peace from Jesus Christ you cannot separate them you cannot separate them he that honoreth the son honoreth the father also you cannot honor the father without honoring the son the essence of Christianity is Christ Jesus Christ and there are people who will talk in glowing terms about God but when you narrow down this concept of God to Jesus Christ all of a sudden they become dropouts and I heard one person say well I wasn't speaking in terms of Jesus Christ when I was talking about God I was thinking more in generality that's the problem the world thinks too general about God they even reduce him to nature you know there is no such thing as nature you use the term and

I use it too and we understand what we mean by it but we say nature provides for the little birds and does this for them and doesn't it wonderful what nature does nature doesn't do anything God does it God does it Jesus didn't say well consider the lilies of the field that nature clothes them God clothes the lilies of the field God provides for the fowl of the air but man can get uncomfortable talking in those concepts especially if you happen to be an evolutionist so we say nature and then we call her a woman remove it a little further mother nature we make commercials it isn't nice to fool mother nature aren't we a kooky people I tell you you know what all of this is I am convinced I'm not a psychologist or psychiatrist I think all of these things in many instances are nothing but an unconscious unintentional but still very real attempt to move us further and further and further away from the truth of God we even give things other names just to keep from using his it's a kind of disguise peace peace and grace that comes from God our father comes from

Jesus Christ also and notice then it is only fitting that thanksgiving be directed through him verse 8 I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you why do you thank God through Jesus Christ Paul says well I thank God through Jesus Christ peace because everything for which I have to be thankful comes through Jesus Christ so I turn around and send it back that way by thanksgiving through Jesus Christ came through him why not be thankful through him it is all centered here in Christ God has chosen this way to do it he has centered it all in the person of his son and there is no true thanksgiving except it is offered through Jesus Christ and then somebody comes along and says well what about a Hindu a Hindu can give thanks to God and he doesn't even believe in Jesus Christ don't you believe it for a minute he can mouth words he can say that he's thankful to God so can a Buddhist and a

[38 : 42] Muslim and all the rest but it is not true thanksgiving what if he really means it doesn't make any difference God doesn't hear it God hears prayer and God hears thanksgiving through Jesus Christ well that's very narrow you mean to say that everybody else is wrong yes that's right that's right everybody else is wrong everybody who is not plugged into Jesus Christ is wrong and if that isn't true then let's all just go home and forget it I realize that's exclusive it's intended to be it's an exclusive gospel I realize how narrow that makes us look and I realize how intolerable that makes us look and if ever there was a day and age when intolerance is not tolerated it's today because we like to think in terms of ecumenicity including everybody and everything and all the rest of it and granted that can make you a lot more comfortable in certain circles but that's not the way to go and that's not the way

Paul goes and that's not the way the word goes I am thankful because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world that's neat that's really neat you know why I think it's especially neat Paul is thankful that the Roman Christians have established for themselves a reputation on the basis that their faith is heard of throughout the whole world and Paul apparently didn't have a thing to do with it isn't that great Paul is rejoicing and thankful over the spiritual things taking place in this congregation that he can't take any credit for at all I like that that's really neat here is the chiefest of the apostles acknowledging that God is doing a tremendous work and he isn't doing it through him Paul said I'm really thankful there's no ministerial jealousy here and yet

Paul recognizes that there are certain things that these people at Rome need to know and he is eager to get to them to communicate these things to them and also to be edified and encouraged by them he's going to bring that out very shortly God whom I serve in my spirit and we talked about that and the contrast between serving in the spirit as opposed to serving in the flesh I understand Christians who want to do great things for God and I understand their motive may be a sincere motive and yet we must realize that it is very very easy to serve God in the flesh that is we tell God what needs to be done for him and how we are going to do it and then we ask him to bless it and that's serving the Lord in the flesh rather than taking our cue and our direction from him and making it a spiritual operation he goes on to say that he makes requests in verse 10 he's always praying for them and he makes requests if perhaps now at last by the will of

God I may succeed in coming to you when I really studied that in the beginning when we went through it and looked at it especially in the original language this thing really threw me really threw me to hear an apostle I mean if ever if I may use the term if ever Jesus Christ had a right hand man it was Paul the apostle and here is an apostle to whom an abundance of revelations had been made known using using terms like perhaps I couldn't quite get over that is it possible that this man in such an exalted covenant relationship with Jesus Christ had some questions about the will of God the answer is yes he did Paul had received numerous revelations from God but he didn't know everything and he admits that here and when

I saw this perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you you would have thought that Paul and his relationship would have been able to have told the Romans his departure date and the time the boat was leaving the time he would arrive and everything I mean after all God knew all this and Paul certainly was in contact with God and yet that wasn't so in fact we are told that Paul had determined to come and visit these Romans on numerous occasions and was prevented from doing so I really like that I think if I'm not if memory serves me correctly I think the message title for that was I have planned but yes it was Paul had planned but God had overruled his plans that should encourage Christians who need to realize that if

[44 : 27] God overruled Paul the apostles plans he may very well overrule ours too but when he does do you know what he has in mind for you same thing he had in mind for Paul only what was best for Paul and when God overrules your plans and bursts your bubbles it's only because he's got something better for you don't lose sight of that fact it'll help you keep your marbles together God is only kindly disposed toward those who know and love him all things do work together for good and that ought to always be our purpose and our objective to be spiritually good for each other

Paul was not going to go and lay on hands and depart a spiritual gift to this one and a different gift to that one that's not what he means he's talking about content here Paul said I have information that you people need now I'm ready to acknowledge and I give thanks to God that even without that information your faith has become known throughout the whole world that's tremendous and yet I have information that will make it even better that will give you even more to work with and what Paul is saying and what he means here in verse 11 is I want to be spiritually good for you so that you may be established this is the end of Bible teaching to establish the saints it means edified it means strengthened it means confirmed it means built up it means provide you with the information as they say in this day and age that will help you get your spiritual act together it means to provide you with the information that will enable you to cope and operate and function in this day and age to give you the ammunition the wherewithal that will enable you to be what you need to be that's what

Paul wanted to impart to the Romans and do you know that should be the end of Bible teaching today to provide people with information that they can use that's supposed to be why we're here this is supposed to be a learning situation I am appalled at the people who think that you worship without learning where everybody sits with a blank stare on their face and looks at stained glass windows or something and this is called worship worship is making yourself more aware of what God has done for you in Christ so that you have a greater index of appreciation and love to him that's what worship is all about can't wait to get to Rome I have spiritual information that will be good for you and will establish you and Paul says and this business of a ministry is a two way street

I know what you people have will be good for me that I also he says may be encouraged and we talked a little while about apostolic discouragement we came to the conclusion that Paul had some periods of discouragement and you know why he did because he was a human being and I don't care listen I don't care how much you have it all together there are going to be some times when you are not going to be on top of it I don't care how mature you are or how spiritual you are there are going to be some times when we will suffer a lapse of faith a lapse of confidence in the promises of God I'm not saying you should I'm saying you will and so will I and so have

I and the reason is because we are just so intensely human that there are times when our memory gets a little short there are times when I found Romans 8 28 to just be unbelievable that's that's really a strange verse you know Romans 8 28 to think that God gave that verse all things work together for good to think that God gave that verse to the whole human race with the exception of one person me isn't that something isn't that something and I've lived in that valley I've known some depression if you're normal you've known some depression

[50 : 23] Paul the apostle knew some depression but I'll tell you something when he hit the bottom of that valley of depression you know what he did he pitched a lean to and he stayed there just for a short while then he moved on you know what some of us do we get in the valley of depression and we build a mansion there and we furnish it sumptuously and elaborately and we say well after all I might as well make this place as nice as I can if I'm going to live here the rest of my life and that's wrong because nobody has to live in depression and nobody should yet Paul recognized that he could use the encouragement that they had to provide and then in verse 13 he says as we've already indicated I've planned to come unto you often he says verse 13 often I really like this listen I don't like

Paul's plans being thwarted I mean I don't like to think of that for Paul's sake you know I like to think of a successful image of an apostle somebody who knows what he wants and he always gets what he wants and knows how to get where he's going and all the rest of it and here is this guy who says he's an apostle now 13 epistles he wrote and who knows how many churches he established and he says I planned often to come to you and it just didn't work out and it still hasn't worked out to this time I say glory to God I like that Paul saying my plans didn't always work out man I like traveling in that company because I had a lot of plans that didn't work out you mean that that's the norm for the Christian life sure it is sure it is what do you think God is some sugar daddy that just gives you everything you want every time you ask for it God is always sifting and sorting our requests and our plans and he won't let anything get through that isn't good for us and

God knew when Paul originally asked to go to Rome Rome the center of the world and God said not now Paul not now Paul I wonder how many boat tickets he bought for Rome never got to use didn't pan out keep in mind the next time God says no what you want to do thank you father thank you I don't know what you're protecting me from but it's something just like when a little toddler is walking around and gets near the stove and he wants to touch it and you say no and he reaches to touch it again and you take his hand and smack his and he cries oh how terribly he's been mistreated he's sure you don't love him but you're protecting him from something and does that little toddler look up to you and say oh thank you that you smacked my hand and wouldn't let me touch the stove

I'm so grateful to you now he stands there and he screams and he hollers and he has a temper tantrum and he's thinking and you've got something better in mind for them you're thinking in terms of a healthy hand and God is always thinking of something better for us and he was for Paul here too notice Paul's motive he wanted to impart some spiritual gift or truth to them and he wanted to obtain fruit among them even as among the rest of the Gentiles and then in verse 14 he makes this tremendous statement here I am under obligation I am debtor I have a debt to pay and this is the idea of a personal moral obligation Paul says I am obligated for two reasons first of all because of what Jesus Christ has done for me and provided for me

I am obligated to Christ to disseminate this information and secondly just because I have it and you don't I am obligated to give it to you I have a two fold obligation so woe is me if I preach not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ he had a heart that was tuned to the needs of humanity and he had the message that humanity needed to gladden that heart and Paul said it would be morally wrong for me not to share this information there's an application there for us isn't it for each and every one of us who have a personal relationship with Christ we are under moral obligation also to everyone who does not have it to share with them that which we have so it goes to the

[55 : 34] Greeks and the barbarians that is to the Greek speaking individuals and to those who were not cultured by the Grecian Hellenized world or way of thinking to those who would be considered by the Greeks as barbaric both to the wise and the foolish and Paul says I want to go on record that so far as I am concerned for my part as much as it lies within me and to the extent that it is my decision I am ready to go I am eager to preach the gospel to you that be at Rome also however I have been that a number of times and God says no not now so I just want you people at Rome to know that my not coming to you isn't any doing of mine I don't want you to think that I haven't been there because I didn't want to come because for my part I am eager but God has restrained me through providential circumstances and what not that I have not gotten there and I want you to realize this also another reason

I really want to come is because I am not ashamed of the gospel I do not shrink back because I have taken this gospel and I have tried it and tested it and I know it can stand up the gospel can hold its own I am not ashamed of it there is nothing in it that would cause me to be ashamed we discussed the fact that from a strictly human standpoint there are plenty of reasons to be ashamed of the gospel and every Christian who is ashamed of the gospel is ashamed because he has not really reckoned with the truth that is involved here the gospel repudiates human goodness the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ will take the human ego and extract it from you throw it down on the ground and stomp all over it nobody wants that to happen to their ego that's what the gospel does you don't win many friends by telling people that their self-worth to them is one thing their self-worth to somebody else is another thing their self-worth to

God on a scale of one to ten is minus four that's that's bad news that's bad news and it's not easy to tell people that it would be easier to tell your best friend they have bad breath sometimes and to tell them that before God they just don't measure up that's not easy to do and some Christians shrink back from it it is foolishness to those who are perishing 1st Corinthians 1 18 it is a stumbling block to the Jews and it is everywhere spoken against today the essence of the gospel of grace is spoken against today and the popular message is the message that tells people how wonderful they are and how sweet they are and how nice they are and how loving they are and how much God cares for them just like they are and how grateful

God is that they give him an hour out of their busy schedule through the week and you can win a lot more friends with that kind of preaching but the essence of the gospel is spoken against everywhere now do you know of anyone who wants to come out in a positive forceful way to proclaim a message that everybody is talking against that's exactly what we are called upon to do it is a message that is totally contrary to human and that's exactly why a lot of Christians shrink back from proclaiming it they are always looking at the gospel from man's point of view not God's point of view but when you look at it from God's point of view the only conclusion you can reach is I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation why should

I be ashamed of the gospel when it can do the revolutionizing the regenerating of a human life that nothing else can do people interesting thing in some circles it is considered in vogue to talk about your psychiatrist your therapist you know and if you travel in a certain set I guess they call them jet setters or what not it is considered a social status symbol to have your own shrink and you go and tell your close friends and what not what your therapist and your psychiatrist said and all the rest and this is considered a great item for social boasting interesting isn't it people to whom they go and pay their fifty dollars an hour cannot begin to do for them what the gospel does free free of charge isn't it great

[61 : 11] Jesus doesn't charge fifty dollars a half an hour he's free free unthinkable that anyone could be ashamed but we are to everyone the power of God for salvation to everyone that believeth to the Jew first and also to the Greek for in it that is in this gospel the righteousness of God is declared or displayed and that simply means that the gospel which is the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's display of what it took to satisfy the righteousness of God that's what it took what was necessary for God to be able to be satisfied with you that man on the cross that's what was necessary that's what it took even as the

Old Testament says it is all of faith the righteous man man God or Christ to go him God or life could or woman or sh