

I Thank God for You

Romans 1:8-15

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: When we express our faith in the Lord through obedience to His teachings, we give a spiritual gift, a blessing, to those around us.

Paul wanted to be a blessing to the Romans, to “impart some spiritual gift to them to make them strong” (vs. 11), and he knew that they, in turn, would be a blessing to him, that together they would be “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (vs. 12).

I. Paul’s Gratitude to God (1:8)

- Paul was a man who was filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. He had a positive outlook on life, a winning attitude.
- Why? Because he had a close walk with the Lord—he pursued and enjoyed intimate relationship with God.
 - Paul knew his God and he knew he was on the winning side.
 - Paul knew that God was in control; He was working out His perfect plan, even when things did not appear to be going well; and he knew that God had called him to be on His team.
- We too need to cultivate an attitude of praise and thanksgiving.
 - It’s easy to get focused on all the negative things that are going on.
 - As Christians we, of all people, should be filled with praise and thanksgiving.
 - Corrie Ten Boom (paraphrased): “If you focus on what’s going on *in the world*, you’ll be *distressed*. If you focus on what’s going on *inside yourself*, you’ll be *depressed*. But if you focus on *the Lord*, you’ll be at *rest* and you’ll be *blessed*.”

A. Through Jesus Christ

1. The blessings of God come to us through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)
2. Our prayers and praise, our worship and service rise as an acceptable offering to God through Jesus Christ.
3. “Through Christ, God sends his love and forgiveness to us; through Christ, we send our thanks to God.” (*Life Application Study Bible*, p. 2026)
4. There is only one Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have a relationship with Jesus, He’s all you need! (1 Timothy 2:5-6; Ephesians 5:19-20; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:4-5)

B. For Their Faith

1. The believers in Rome had a great reputation because they believed the Lord, they trusted Him, they took Him at His Word and they took an open stand for Him.
2. Genuine faith manifests itself in observable works, actions and deeds.
3. People can *see* our faith in the Lord, or the lack thereof. (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)
4. *This Little Light of Mine* – If you’ve been a Christian for a significant period of time and the people around you don’t know it, there’s something wrong with your light!

5. If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?
6. What kind of reputation do we have in our community? Are we good models of the Christian faith, or do people get a warped idea from what they see in us?

II. Paul's Service to God (1:9a)

- Paul offered himself to God and others through faithful and fruitful service.

A. With His Whole Heart

1. How would you describe your service to God? Is it whole-hearted? Half-hearted? Does God get the leftovers of a heart that is devoted to the pursuits of this world?
2. Paul's service was genuine, not superficial. He didn't serve to be seen by men; he aimed to please God.

B. In Preaching the Gospel

1. Paul served according to his calling and his gifting.
 - Obviously, preaching is not the only way to serve God!
 - Are you available to be used by God as the Lord desires?
2. If you are committed to serving the Lord, your spiritual gifting will become apparent.
 - We normally enjoy, are satisfied, productive and effective when we are serving God according to our gifting.
 - Try serving in various areas and ministries and go with what is working for you.
 - If you're not serving, don't blame God! Don't say you're waiting to be called. Start serving and He will guide you.
3. How are you serving God? The Great Commission that Jesus gave to the Church is to *make disciples*. What are you doing that is contributing to making disciples of Jesus Christ?

III. Paul's Prayers to God (1:9b-10)

A. Paul Prayed Continually (1:9b-10a)

B. Paul Prayed in Submission to God's Will (1:10b)

IV. Paul's Longing for the Romans (1:11-13)

A. Paul Longed to Be a Blessing (1:11)

B. Paul Longed to Be Encouraged (1:12)

C. Paul Longed for a Spiritual Harvest (1:13)

V. Paul's Obligation to the Romans (1:14-15)