

Wholehearted Service and Unselfish Prayer

Romans 1:8-15

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: We should serve God according to our calling and gifting in order that others might come to know the Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

I. Paul's Gratitude to God (1:8)

- We need to intentionally cultivate an attitude of praise and thanksgiving.
 1. It's easy to get focused on all the negative things that are going on around us.
 2. As Christians we, of all people, should be filled with praise and thanksgiving.
 3. 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. There is only one Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. 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. Genuine faith manifests itself in observable works. (James 2:18)
2. People can *see* our faith in the Lord, or the lack thereof. (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

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 God according to his calling and his gifting.
 - Obviously, preaching is not the only way to serve God!
 - Are you available to be used by the Lord as He desires?
2. If you are committed to serving the Lord, your spiritual gifting will become apparent.
 - We normally enjoy, are satisfied, and are productive and effective when we are serving God according to our gifting.
 - Try serving the Lord in various areas and ministries, then 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* (Matthew 28:18-20). What are you doing that is contributing to making disciples of Jesus Christ? That will last for eternity?

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

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

1. Prayer is what transforms our mere human endeavors into the work of God.
2. The Lord invites us to be co-laborers with Him in accomplishing His mission of bringing people to Himself and making them His disciples.
3. It is prayer that enables us to appropriated the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. It is prayer that enables us to be effective and spiritually fruitful in our efforts to serve and glorify God and expand His kingdom.

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

1. Paul took his cue from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:39)
2. James 4:13-15; Proverbs 16:3, 9; 19:21.
3. We need to set goals, make plans and work hard but also maintain a submissive attitude.

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)

- Whenever we come together, we should come expecting a blessing.
- But make it your prayer: "Lord, how can I be a blessing to others? How can I be a channel of Your love and encouragement to someone else today?"

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

- We, too, should feel a sense of obligation to share the Gospel with those around us.
- The Lord did not save us so that we could hoard the Good News and keep it to ourselves.