

Romans 1:8~15 (Verses 14~15)

Q: Are you *indebted* to God?

To be “*indebted*” to be a “*debtor*” to someone, means you are “*obligated*” to them, that you “*owe*” them.

We understand it... You may be indebted to the bank... You may owe them for your home, or you may owe them for the car you drive. We are indebted to the electric company, the phone company, the Water Company, etc... Because of the services they provide for us, we have to work to pay them.

You ever heard the saying... “**I owe, I owe, so off to work I go...**”

That statement holds a lot of truth... DEBT is a “*Huge Motivator*... I don’t know many people who go to work everyday, and work hard all day, who do so simply because they LOVE IT! You may enjoy your job, but be honest... If you didn’t have to be there, you wouldn’t be... The reason we labor every day, is because we are in debt!

We “*owe*” a lot of people... And just to make sure we don’t “*forget*” that we “*owe*” them, these companies are “*gracious*” enough to send us a “*friendly reminder*” each month to remind us.

Q: But what about God... Are you *indebted* to God?

I need to make it clear, in no way am I talking about “*tithing*” or simply your “*attendance*” to church... Tithing is simply “*giving back*” to God from what he has “*blessed you*” with... Coming to church is a privilege, something we “*get*” to do... I am speaking specifically to the area of “*SERVICE...*” to Him.

Do you “**Owe God**” anything for what He’s done for you?

Paul did... Paul saw himself “*indebted*” to God...

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

You may say... “*Preacher, that’s not what that verse says, it references people...*”

True... But isn’t that what “*Christianity*” is? Isn’t Christianity, “*Christ in us?*” Doesn’t the scripture teach that as far as we are concerned, we just provide the “*Holy Spirit*” a dwelling place, a body in which He can carry out His work through? And if that’s true, that we are just an instrument that the Holy Spirit works through, then just what is the “*Work*” of God? **To seek and to save, that which is lost...** The sole purpose God has for the church, is to come together, so that those whom God has called and gifted can teach to mature the believers, to make disciples to go and reach the lost with the gospel of God.

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

¹⁵So, *as much as in me is...* “*With all that’s in me*”... **With all my heart**... he says...

And that’s exactly what we’ve been looking at, in our study here in verses 8~15... *Paul’s heart.*

Paul had a **heart** for people... In verses 10~15, we see the “*results*” of the “*Gospel of God*” in Paul’s heart. Paul loved people... And there are only two types of people, saved and the lost, those “*In the Church*” and those “*Outside the Church.*” And as a “*result*” of what God had done in Paul’s heart, he loved them both!

The life of Paul could be summed up with two words... *“The Gospel”*...and... *“People.”*
I can’t imagine more appropriate words that should describe every Christian’s life than these two words.

When someone passes away, if you listen closely, you’ll hear what they are best remembered for...
A good builder, a skilled craftsman, a hunter, fisherman, car enthusiast, whatever... But I can’t imagine leaving a greater testimony behind, than to be known for my love of the gospel, and my love for people!

The interesting thing I have found is, that these two are inseparable... One can’t exist without the other. If you truly, truly love the gospel, you will love people! And you’ll never really love people, outside of loving the gospel! Many claim today, that they “love god” and yet, love the gospel and people very little.

Only a heart, that has been transformed by this precious word, is a heart that is able to truly love people!
I can’t imagine a better description of God, than a lover of people... *“For God so loved the world...”*

In verses 10~13, we see a characteristic of Paul’s heart, which *should characterize* every follower of Christ... That of *“being a blessing to others.”* Paul had a heart for his *“Fellow Brothers & Sisters”* in the Lord. He wanted to use the spiritual gifts God had given him, and minister to the saints there in Rome...

One translation puts it this way... ¹¹*For I long to visit you so I can share a spiritual blessing with you that will help you grow strong in the Lord.* ¹²*I’m eager to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours. In this way, each of us will be a blessing to the other.*

God has designed the church, in that we are dependant on each other! I have what you need, and you have what I need. He has gifted me in one area, and you in another area. And we are to exercise those gift to profit others within the church family.

Q: I asked a question last Sunday night... *Are you a blessing to others?*

If you are a Christian, you’re one of two things... You’re either *“filled with the Spirit of God”*, thus a *“blessing”* to other Christians... Or, you’re not. Some people *“hinder”* the church! Complaining, murmuring, slacking, etc... Not a blessing to be around at all... You’re one of two... Which one are you?

Paul’s hearts desire was to be a blessing to his *“Fellow Brothers & Sisters”* in the Lord...
Here in verse 14, we see Paul’s other desire... **The Lost** there...

(Vs 14) ¹⁴*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.*

As a *Christian*, Paul feels an *“Obligation”* to these people... He *“Owes”* these people...

Paul says... *“I owe it to these people, to share with them what I know about God!”*

Doesn’t that describe what Christianity is all about?

I know you agree with me, Theologically...but do you agree in Practice?

To know something is true, doesn’t make it true in our lives... To really grasp the truth here, we need to understand that there are two very important aspects of the Christian life... *Theological and Practical*...

Theology is defined as...The study of religious faith, practice and experience. Especially in the area of God and God’s relation to the world.

Theology is simply the study of God, and his relations to mankind. It is the study of the deep things of God. It is the search to understand God. The SBTS in Louisville, is a place where they teach theology to those called into the ministry. Those who are called to preach the word, need to know the word!

So we see, there is the “*Theological Aspect*”, then there is the “*Practical Aspect*.” And this is where we take the truth derived out of the theological process, and we take that truth, and make practical application, and put into practice, what we know to be true of God.

Theology is extremely important, in that, as a result of theology, truth is made known. To not have theology, is to have its counterpart...ignorance! And I just want to say, this is well illustrated in many pulpits and classrooms in churches... They don't know what they believe! Because of laziness, and lack of respect and reverence to the word of God, many do not study hard, and dig for the truths in the scripture. And then when Sunday roles around, they have “*nothing to say*” as far as content!

One man has said...**Just because you're “*talking*” doesn't mean you are “*teaching!*”**

One might talk for the whole hour...but the real question is... **What was said?**

Was it the truths of God? Was it “words of life”? Was it teaching that will help transform the hearers?

Without a doubt... Paul was the most “*Theological Christian*” of his time! Paul knew what he was talking about! Paul knew more about the scripture than any of the other apostles, for that matter, more than any other Christian on earth. We can go one step further, and say that Paul was the one, that God used to give us “*The Very Theology of the Christian Faith...*”

I've heard it said... “*Don't give me all that theology stuff, that doctrine...just give me Jesus!*” Well, that's where they err... It is the doctrine that brings us to Jesus! It is how we know who it is we worship!

I've said all of that, to say this... Paul is writing to the Romans, concerning the “*Gospel of God*.” A letter in which he will reveal most of the theology that the church is built upon. But here in verse 14, we see the results of a “*Right Theology...*”

A “*Right “Theology” produces a “Right Heart...*” Paul had a heart for lost!

Q: Do you have a “*Heart for the Lost?*”

You ever met anyone, who seems to “*know*” a lot about the bible...but if you look closely, they have no real concern for others, especially the lost?

Listen to me... Do you know how you can tell when someone “*Really Knows*” the bible...

It's not the “*information*” they are able to share with you about it...

It's the “*transformation*” that is revealed in their lives!

Their hearts are changed...in that they now have a heart for the lost!

“*Information*” has never changed anyone... The only thing that can change a persons heart is GRACE! I've met people, who know “*little*” of the bible, who are “*Great Servants*” to God! They lay down their lives for the gospel!

Someone who truly “*KNOWS*” the Bible, is changed by the “*TRUTH*” contained in it! That's the difference between “*Head Knowledge*” and “*Heart Knowledge*”...SERVICE! Putting what we “*know*” into action!

I need to make myself crystal clear... Theologically speaking... I know what the bible says about Salvation. At least, I think I do... If I understand it correctly, the scriptures teach, that all of mankind has sinned. That as a result of that sin, we have been separated from God! It teaches that no matter how hard we try, no matter how much we try to straighten up our lives, no matter how much good things we do... It

is impossible for us to save ourselves. It is impossible to make ourselves right with God! It teaches us, that is why God sent his Son Jesus... To take upon himself, the punishment, that we all so richly deserve! It teaches that because of what Jesus has done for us, that we have the blessed opportunity to be reconciled to God! Just as Ephesians so clearly states it...

⁸*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Now, I know “*Theologically*” that is true!

Salvation comes not by my good works, nothing I do, but rather through faith in Jesus Christ... **Grace!**

But does that mean...that “*my works*” are irrelevant?

Does it mean *I am free* to do what I want with my life?

Does it mean, that *I am under no obligation* at all?

I “*Owe my life*” to God for what he did on that cross for me!

Just because I could never pay him back for what he’s done for me, doesn’t mean that I’m not going to give him all I’ve got! The way I see it...everything I have belongs to him... I am indebted to God! By the grace of God, I’m going to spend the rest of my life, trying to give back just a little piece of what he’s given to me... And the only work, the only service, the business of God, is in that of reaching lost souls!

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

What Paul found in the “Gospel of God”, changed his heart, in that he no longer lived his life for himself, but as Christ did, he laid down his life for others! Those dying in sin...

Q: Are you *indebted* to God?

Do you “*Owe God*” anything for what He’s done for you?