

Romans 1:8~12

(Part 2, Verse 9)

Last Sunday, by studying about the church in Rome, we were challenged as a Church to examine ourselves, to take a good evaluation of what we are “*Doing*” outside this building. To look closely at the influence and impact we are having on this world with the “*Gospel of God!*” The church in Rome was a spirit filled church, and they were really making a difference in the lives of those around them.



Paul begins his letter to the Church in Rome by... *praising God, for the great and mighty work he was doing in their lives through His Son Jesus Christ!*

Jesus Christ had changed their lives!

And as a result, they were a church; *The Whole World was talking about!*

(Vs 8) ...*that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

It's a passage, that calls us to take **a biblical evaluation** of ourselves... We may have a *beautiful building*, we may *be learning a lot in bible study*, we may have *weekly events*, we may develop *various organizations* to meet any interest... *good offerings*, and think were doing good...

The kind of church Jesus described in Revelation 3, “*The Lukewarm church...*” They thought they were ok, but Jesus counseled them... *anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou may see.*



But listen, don't miss this...

The “Real Measure” of a church, is the influence it has on society!

Listen, make sure you understand what I'm saying... All those things are good, and greatly needed! As a matter of fact, having various organizations, like WMU & Brotherhood, Sunday School, bible studies, etc...are not only good, they are crucial! But what I am saying is this... The only way to see if they are effective or not, is the fruit they produce. Everything that goes on in the church must revolve around the *sole purpose of growing disciples* to go out and share the gospel of God!

Beloved, if we are not “impacting this world” for Jesus Christ...everything else is vain!

Listen to me... I cannot stress the importance of this statement! This statement is “*Vital*” in relation to the future ministry of this church here in Winston.

I “*sense deep in my spirit*” that a “*Holy Ghost Revival*” hinges on us fully grasping this teaching!

I'm convinced, that God is looking for a people, who love Him, and want to be used by Him to reach out to this lost and dying world with His Gospel! I'm convinced, that with such a people, God would open up the windows and doors of heaven, and bless such a church beyond what we could imagine! There is NO DOUBT in my mind, that with such a people, God would create another “*Acts Church...*”



(Vs 8) ...*that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

What are people saying about us here at Providence?

Would you like to be... “***A Church The Whole World is Talking About!***”

★ Listen very closely... **If we are going to be a church, a people that impact the society around us for the gospel, it will be as a result, of what God does in and through us!**

Right? Is that a true statement? Sure it is... Knowing that, it makes us totally dependant on God, we can't do it without Him... Right? Now we know, that God is able to do it, and no doubt is willing to do this, for that is His entire purpose for His church. Knowing that, that He is both "Able" and "Willing" to greatly impact this world in and through us, that leaves just one question...

Q: Are We Usable? Are you & I vessels that God can work his mighty works in?

Contained in section of scripture, verses 8~15, are characteristics that helps us to understand, the type of person God uses... We are going to see, just what it was that made Paul the man he was for the gospel! I want you to hear what I'm about to say...

It is not "Your Past" that makes you unusable to God...but "Your Present!"

In this passage, we are given insight to the condition **of Paul's heart!** We will see that his impact on society had nothing to do with great skill, or abilities, but simply a man, whose heart was properly conditioned, prepared for use! And upon examining the heart of Paul, we must take what we learn, and lay it along side our heart...and see, if we, are useable like Paul!

The first Characteristic we saw, was Paul's heart for the "Gospel of God..." He praised God for how he was using the church in Rome to advance the gospel throughout the whole world! There's no doubt as to why this is first... If we do not "truly love the word of God", than nothing else matters. The "Power of God" is contained in the "Word of God..."

(Vs 16~17) ¹⁶For 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.*

As I look back, I thought about how God led us into the study of Psalms 19! A study on the "Precious Word of God!" How God wanted us to put it in it's proper place in our lives! What a testimony that is... God is so good. I had no idea how he would use that study to tie in here, but He did! And the first characteristic we see in Paul's heart, is his "Love for the Gospel of God!" This is the first and most important characteristic of Paul's heart, because it is the "Source" of Paul's power! God's power was "released" in Paul's life, simply for the fact that Paul was a man who loved the word!

Jesus told us... ⁶**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.** Jesus is saying, that if we long after his words, that upon eating and drinking from this fountain, we would be filled! What does food and water provide for our bodies? Strength! Many churches are weak and powerless today, for a lack of proper nutrition! Feed my sheep!

I don't doubt, that many churches love each other, love their home church... **But do they love the gospel?**

Next, verse 9 reveals another characteristic...

(Vs 9) ⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

A reference to "The True **Spiritual Worship** of God!"

Jesus said in John 4:23~24...²³ *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him.* ²⁴ *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

I'm concerned, that many don't understand the meaning of "Worship." Some might have the false idea, that coming to church is worshipping God... It plays a very important part "**IN**" the worship of God, but it is not worshipping God.

I'm reminded of a story I heard... A young man, inquisitive about his friends church, asked him what time the "service" started. To his shock, his friend replied...*somewhere around 12:30*. Taken back, the young man reiterated his question. To which his friend replied... Oh, your talking about the "Preparation Time". That starts at 11:00. I thought you meant, when we start serving...

Cute little story, but it is full of truth! At least it is according to scripture! Ephesians 4:11~12...
¹¹*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;* ¹²*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Paul uses the word... λατρευο | (λατ-ρυσσοε-ο)

...to minister (to God), that is, render religious homage:—serve, do the service, worship.

The Greek word for *serve and worship* are one in the same... The word translated here as "serve" is also translated "worship" throughout the scripture.

It could be translated... "*whom I worship with my spirit...*" in the gospel of his son...

There is a very important concept, that we can learn from this passage...

To "Worship God" is to "Serve Him".

Churches all over America may be full this morning...

But that doesn't mean they "Worship God" ... **they may just be religious!**

Church may be **just another part** of their life, just another aspect, something they do on Sundays!

It's what we do when we leave here that determines whether or not we worship God, by our service or non service to God.

"...whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son" is in contrast to the legalistic, external service. It speaks of new way of life, no longer does Paul reference the Old Covenant ways, going beyond that of simply doing what is right, the "external"...going beyond "religious activity."

Outwardly, visibly.... It may be difficult for us to determine who difference between the two... The reason is, that outwardly they appear much the same. I may fool you, by partaking in the things of the church, but I can't fool God!

(Vs 9) ⁹*For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son*

What WE need to learn from this passage can be summed up, in two words...

God Knows! ⁹*For God is my witness...*

Paul says... *God knows my heart...* And to Paul, that's all that mattered... he lived out his life, seeking to please God. Not simply with good deeds and actions... but with his heart! The part no one else saw... but God...

The best example of this in the scripture, are the Pharisees...

Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Adrian Rogers said... *If we seek to please God, it doesn't matter who else we please...*

But if we don't seek to please God... it doesn't matter who we please...

God Knows... I'll never forget that revival service, that Tony Horn was preaching, and he was talking about slacking in our service to God, neglecting church, and the "Excuses" that we offer!

He was elaborating to the fact that we try to cover up the truth with excuses!

To this, Tony said... "*God Understands...*"

(Luke 14) "*The Great Supper...*" Three excuses...

"I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it..."

"I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them..."

"I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come..."

Webster's definition of "**Excuse...**"

...to make apology for... to remove blame from...

In short, an "excuse" is... "**The Reason given**" for not partaking in a particular event...

Using the example of this story, these three men gave "*legitimate excuses...*" for not coming to the supper. Legitimate in the sense, that chances are, this man had just bought some ground. Chances are the second man had just bought some oxen. Chances are, the third man had just recently gotten married... All three of these could be "*legitimate excuses...*"

But the point of Jesus' teaching here, is the fact that even though, these were "true statements", they were not true! In other words, these men gave "*these three reasons*" why they couldn't come. And to anyone who knew these men, these would have been "*good reasons*" for not coming...

To all who knew them, they would be "*Justified*" for not going... And by the way, that's another meaning of "Excuse" in Webster's... to "*Justify...*"

Listen... *In the "eyes of all the people who knew them..." they would "APPEAR Justified" for not going to the supper...*

But **GOD KNOWS!**

²⁴ *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*

These guys would have been much better off, if they'd just told the real reason...

I don't want to go! "I don't care much for him..."

But that would sound bad...

So they each came up with another reason... Ones that God saw right through!

(Vs 9) ⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son...

True Spiritual Worship!

God Knows... Paul lived his life before men, with an open heart... a pure heart... a sincere heart!
We know this is a true statement, by the way God greatly used Paul...

God will not work through any other kind of heart!

Paul says... *“God knows my heart...”* Paul had a heart that was “useable” to God!
What about you...are you “Useable?”

Remember...*It is not “Your Past” that makes you unusable to God...but “Your Present!”*
God only uses people who worship him, who serve him from the depths of their heart!