

**Romans 1: 5-12; “Your Faith Being Encouraged”, Sermon # 2 in a series entitled –
“From Faith to Faith”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
February 26th, 2023, in the Morning Worship Service.**

The purpose of the apostle Paul in writing this letter is shown here in these verses that we are looking at, especially verses 11 and 12. He says – “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established – that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of your and me.” You can see by these words that it was Paul’s purpose to encourage and strengthen the faith of these brethren in the church at Rome. And he wanted to be encouraged by their faith as well. I believe that it will be important for us to think deeply about the truths which are found here. Because if we will carefully consider these truths, we ourselves will come to have stronger faith, and then we ourselves will learn how to encourage the faith of our brethren around us.

So, how can we be encouraged in our faith, and be an encouragement to others? Well, 1st of all – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize that you are one of the called of Jesus Christ. (verses 5-7a) 2nd – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize that grace and peace are blessings which are imparted to you. (verse 7b) 3rd – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize the importance of giving thanks for the faith of other brothers and sisters. (verse 8) And 4th – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize the importance of unceasing prayer, for others as well as for yourself. (verses 9-12)

1st of all – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize that you are one of the called of Jesus Christ.

Paul begins here by speaking of his own calling, and that of the other apostles. Verse 5 – It is through Christ, he says, that we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name. We see here, right off the bat, that Paul’s being an apostle was not something that he had chosen for himself to do. It was an office in Christ’s Church that he was called and appointed to, by Christ Himself. So, we ourselves need to understand that when we are called by God, that it is a spiritual calling to salvation first, and then to an appointed work, second; and then to bear fruit in relation to that work, according to the gift that you have been given, third.

I want to give you some other verses from Paul to establish this point. 2nd Timothy chapter 1, verses 8-11. “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle , and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

So, you can see here that the only way that you will ever be able to suffer for Christ and the gospel is when you have the power of God to be able to do so. God Himself must first save you from your selfishness and your sins, but He does so through your being called in a holy way; that is, by your hearing of the only truly holy Man who has ever lived, God’s own dear Son. When God calls you through Christ, it is not at all according to your own works, but according to His own grace and purpose which was given to you in Christ Jesus before time began. Grace and God’s purpose concerning your becoming a Christian were formed in the Council of Redemption before time began between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In the Covenant of Redemption the plan was made, that you the sinner would be saved if you are one of God’s chosen. In order that you would be saved, Christ Jesus had to come into the world and purchase grace for you, so that by God’s power you would be effectual called to faith in Christ. Because Christ died and rose again, you can exercise faith in Him when the Spirit opens your eyes and your heart

to the truth. Christ purchased grace by His obeying God's holy law perfectly in every way. He then sealed your pardon with His blood, so that all of your sins would be forgiven and covered. And then, having believed in Him, you are justified, or declared righteous in God's sight.

Grace is therefore your finding favor with God on the basis of what Christ has done for you personally. When the gospel is preached to you, you must receive the truth that sets you free spiritually. You receive all that Christ has done for you, as a finished work, by faith. But as you know, not everyone believes the gospel. Many are called, but few are chosen, Jesus says. So you can see from that statement that there is a general call which goes out to all men to repent and believe in Christ. But there is also an effectual call when God is working in the heart, opening the heart, so that the person who hears the gospel will see what a necessary thing it is for them to be saved from their sins. When you are called by God you see that you cannot save yourself by the best of their works.

In other words, salvation is not of yourself, it is the gift of God, lest you or any person would boast. Oh, I did this, or I did that, and that is why I am saved and follow Christ. No, anything that you do that is acceptable to God has been done because God was already there, choosing you and then working in your heart in regeneration, opening your eyes to the truth, having ordained that you would believe. He took away your resistance to the truth when He circumcised your heart, and suddenly, amazingly, you saw the loveliness of all that Christ has done for you, the sinner.

You saw yourself as a needy sinner, and you received Christ's finished work and believed in His name. It was a real obedience of faith as Paul calls it in verse 5 of our text. This obedience of faith led to your being seen by God as one of His saints. Now, being one of God's saints means that you are seen by Him as one of His holy ones; one who has been set apart to His good work of grace leading to holiness. In all of His spiritual work in saving you, God looks on you favorably for Jesus' sake. You are seen by Him as being "in Christ".

You are united to Christ. You are one spirit with Him. You have been spiritually adopted by God into His family, made one of His dear children by being placed into Christ's body, the Universal Church. Christ's righteousness has been imputed to you, and you stand perfect and complete before God, in that righteousness. You are seen by God as being clothed with a robe of righteousness. And thus you are beautiful in His sight. According to this verse 5 that we are looking at, grace and apostleship went hand in hand for Paul. It is the same for us. Grace and our calling and our gift are all together in God's purpose and His working.

Remember what the Lord Jesus said to His own apostles in John chapter 15, verses 15 & 16 – "No longer do I call your servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you." So, when these apostles were chosen by grace, and then saved by the effectual call and by being given grace, they were at the same time chosen and appointed the office, gifts, and task for which God had prepared them.

It was even ordained that they would go and bear fruit and that their fruit would remain. Even that certain and definite results from their preaching, which are called here, obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, these were all ordained by God. Even as it says in Acts chapter 13, verses 47 & 48, concerning the preaching of Paul and Barnabas – "For so the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth." "As many as were appointed to eternal life believed." This is such a very encouraging thing, when you realize that the reason that you came to saving faith was because you were effectually called by God. It was His power and purpose which made you a Christian.

2nd – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize that grace and peace are blessings which are personally imparted to you by God. (verse 7b)

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Notice the way that these words are written. Grace and peace to you. He is writing to people who have already been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. And so he is not saying that he wanted them to be justified again and to have peace established between them and God, again, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is saying that he wants them to have grace and peace imparted to their soul and spirit in relation to their being able to better live the Christian life and keep the commandments of God and be useful in their service to God and to Christ.

It is always good for a Christian, especially Christians who are younger in the faith, to know the difference between justification and sanctification. Justification is a once for all time declaration by God of your being righteous in His sight, on the basis of your having believed the in the gospel of the good news of Christ. You believe in Christ, and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to you. His righteousness is a perfect righteousness, and His sufferings were endured in your place as a substitute. So when you believe in Him God forgives you of all of your sins and He remembers them no more. When you believe in Christ then, you are justified. You are seen by God as perfect and complete in Christ.

Justification never fluctuates, and it does not admit of your attaining to a certain degree of your being justified. It never changes. You are either justified or you are not. God will, always and forever, see you in Christ, if you have savingly believed in Him. Your sins are all cast behind His back. They are buried in the deepest sea. God will not bring them up again, even on the judgment of the Last Day, unless it is in relation to your receiving a reward. But there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

The word justify is never used in a physical sense, for producing any real internal change in a person. It is always used in a legal, forensic sense. It is something done outside of yourself. Justification is a law-term which is used in judicial proceedings transacted in a court; in this case God’s own court. Justification stands opposed to condemnation. For the one believing in Jesus, God’s wrath is removed from them, forever. And although He may be angry towards a true believer for a time, because they have fallen into a grievous sin or tolerated backsliding in their life, His anger is but for a moment. His favor is for a lifetime and throughout all eternity.

Sanctification is something which begins when a person is born again by the Spirit of God. It is when the Spirit plants the seed of righteousness in the heart of the sinner who is trusting in Christ for salvation. They have believed because the Spirit raised them from their death in trespasses and sins, and made them alive spiritually in Christ. This is the beginning of holiness and the pursuit of righteousness. There is a putting off of the Old Man which you were, and a clothing yourself with Christ. You cannot put off the flesh entirely, but you will cast off your service to the ruling reigning power of sin and the Devil, by consciously renouncing them.

You consciously put on the New Man, the new principle of grace and holiness, and you begin to exercise all the graces of the Spirit that He has and is imparting to you. The good work of grace being imparted by the Holy Spirit to your spirit is called vivification by theologians. The Spirit is imparting life. He is giving the power to do what is right and the power to put sin to death. You clothe yourself with Christ, and you find the power to bear witness to others of all of the good things which God has done through Christ, and is doing through Christ, for you to grow up to be mature in your faith and in spiritual discernment. Oh, what an encouraging thing this is to realize to realize that the robe of righteousness which you wear as a Christian covers all of your living your life for God. When you sin in your heart or your actions, you can confess your sins and God is faithful and righteous to forgive you of those sins and He cleanses you from all unrighteousness. But all through that time that you sinned you were covered by the robe of righteousness. Christ’s atonement covers you.

God still loves you even when you make sinful mistakes. He knows that if he needs to, He can discipline you for these sins, but His lovingkindness He will not take from you. Christ is interceding for

you at the right hand of the Father. And you by the Spirit will learn to put the sinful deeds of the body to death. And so, you will live and learn as you go on in your walk, trusting and obeying, seeking how to please God, and you will over time make progress in holiness.

3rd – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize the importance of giving thanks for the faith of other brothers and sisters. (verse 8)

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” Do you see the importance of learning to give thanks for the faith of other Christians, when you see their faith in exercise? Paul says that the faith of these Roman believers was spoken of throughout the whole world. What was it that the whole world saw? They saw these young Roman believers turning away from all of their idols. They saw them going to worship with other Christians on the Lord’s Day. They heard them speaking of the great grace that they had received from and through Jesus Christ.

They spoke of their joy in being in the kingdom of God and having a personal spiritual relationship with the living, risen Christ. They did not hide their faith, but they declared it openly. For this Paul gave thanks. He saw the Spirit’s work in their lives. A.W. Pink says – “Nothing is more calculated to dispel a spirit of gloom from the soul than the cultivation of gratitude and praise. The same will cheer and encourage our fellow Christians. Piety is not commended by sadness and sourness.” I agree, and I would ask you, are you able by the grace of God to give thanks for the faith of other Christians, and to learn from them in that regard? What an encouragement it will be to your own faith when you can see other believers trusting in the promises of God, and living to do God’s will in all of its particulars as it is described in the Bible.

4th – Your faith will be encouraged when you realize the importance of unceasing prayer for others, as well as for yourself. (verses 9-12)

“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.” “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established.” What strong language this is; Paul taking an oath as to God’s witnessing what he said concerning his prayers for these believers. He was without ceasing making mention of them in his prayers. I know that this impossible that he could have been doing such a thing, according to our feeble conception of it, but he takes an oath that God would confirm it, that it was so.

He was continually praying, praying without ceasing, for them. And his greatest desire was that he might be able to come to them so that he could impart to them some spiritual gift. What does he mean by this? Well, as an apostle he could come and lay hands on them and they would receive a revelatory gift such as being able to prophesy or to speak in tongues. That could have been his desire. But it is most certain that he did wanted to impart to them greater understanding of the mysteries of God beginning with the mystery of Christ, continuing with the mystery of godliness, and then contributing to their knowledge of the church, the breaking down of the barrier between Jew and Gentile making them one new people.

These were things which were given to him by revelation, and they were meant by God to be given to these young believers in the church of Rome. Let me ask in closing if you can say that you have learned the sanctified art of praying without ceasing? Do you pray about how the knowledge that God has given to you, of His blessed word, can contribute to other believers, to strengthen them and build them up in their faith, and encourage them? These are things which I hope that all of us will ponder and pray about ourselves.