

Message: Romans 1:8-18

Message Date: August 10, 2025

Summary of the Sermon:

What does it look like to genuinely love and invest in fellow believers? Romans 1:8-15 pulls back the curtain on the apostle Paul's heart for the church in Rome, and what we find there is both convicting and deeply encouraging. Paul was thankful for them, praying for them without ceasing, longing to see them, eager to strengthen and stabilize their faith, and bold enough to say he felt personally indebted to share the gospel with them. These are not the actions of someone going through religious motions. This is the heart of God expressed through a surrendered life. As we walk through these five things Paul wanted the Roman believers to know about his love for them, we are challenged to ask ourselves honest questions: Are we genuinely thankful for the people God has placed in our lives? Are we actually praying for them? Do we feel the weight of a debt to share what God has done for us? The natural human heart does not produce this kind of love on its own. But the good news is we are not left to manufacture it ourselves. When we surrender to the Holy Spirit, we receive the very heart of God for people, and that changes everything about how we engage with the world around us.

Title: Not Ashamed: The Power and Purpose of the Gospel

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from Romans 1:8-18, this sermon explores Paul's deep affection for the Roman believers and his unashamed commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The pastor walks through two distinct sections: first, five intimate things Paul wanted the Roman church to know about his heart toward them, and second, five compelling reasons Paul was never ashamed of the gospel. The sermon challenges believers to examine whether they share Paul's love for fellow Christians, his commitment to prayer, and his sense of indebtedness to share the good news with everyone. The pastor emphasizes that the gospel is not merely a religious story but the very power of God, available to all people, rooted in divine righteousness, and backed by the sobering reality of God's wrath against sin. The overarching call is for believers to be filled with God's heart for the world and to share the gospel boldly, without shame.

Key Points:

- Paul was thankful for the Roman believers, particularly because their faith was known throughout the whole world, challenging us to ask whether our own faith is known to those around us
- Paul prayed for the Roman believers without ceasing, serving as a model for consistent, faithful intercession on behalf of fellow Christians
- Paul longed to visit the Romans so he could impart spiritual gifts, help establish and stabilize them in their faith, and experience mutual encouragement through shared belief
- Paul did not want the Romans to be unaware of his repeated attempts to visit them, demonstrating his genuine desire to bear fruit among them as he had among other Gentiles
- Paul considered himself a debtor to all people, Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise alike, obligated by God's command and personal transformation to share the gospel with everyone
- The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, meaning that in sharing it, believers are conveying the very power of God, not merely a personal story or opinion
- The gospel is available to everyone without exception, as God desires all people to be saved and is not willing that any should perish
- The gospel came to the Gentiles through the Jews, and believers should be grateful for the Jewish people through whom the scriptures and the Messiah were given

- In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed, showing that God's perfect standard demands nothing less than sinless perfection, which only Christ fulfilled on our behalf
- The gospel also reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, making clear that rejecting Christ leaves a person under divine judgment, and that God will ultimately deal with all evil in his timing

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 1:8-18, which serves as the primary passage covering Paul's affection for the Roman church and his declaration that he is not ashamed of the gospel
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, summarizing the gospel as Christ dying for sins and rising from the dead according to the scriptures
- Mark 16:15, in which Jesus commands his followers to preach the gospel to every creature
- Isaiah 64, referenced regarding human righteousness being as filthy rags before God
- Romans 10:14, asking how people can believe in one they have not heard, emphasizing the necessity of speaking the gospel aloud
- 2 Peter 3:9, describing God's patience in withholding judgment so that more people have the opportunity to repent
- Hebrews 4:15, affirming that Jesus was tempted in all points as humans are yet remained without sin

Stories:

- The pastor shared a personal reflection on the experience of leading someone to faith in Christ, describing the profound joy and eternal significance of that moment and noting that all of heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents
- The pastor described a personal habit of asking God silently whether to share the gospel with someone, only to be reminded every time of the command to preach the gospel to every creature, illustrating the unnecessary hesitation believers sometimes bring to evangelism
- The pastor referenced the common objection that a loving God would eliminate evil, and responded by pointing out that God will indeed do away with evil, but that his patience in delaying judgment is itself an act of love giving more people time to repent, and that an immediate elimination of all evil would include every human being, saved or not
- The pastor described the two Greek words for wrath, thumos referring to a passionate flaring anger such as a parent might feel upon learning their child was harmed, and orge referring to a slow, methodical, building resolve to see justice done, using both to illustrate the full dimension of God's righteous anger against sin

Discussion Questions:

Paul described himself as a debtor obligated to share the gospel with everyone he encountered -- in what ways do you feel a sense of indebtedness to share your faith, and what holds you back from acting on that obligation?

Paul expressed genuine thankfulness for the Roman believers and prayed for them without ceasing, even before meeting them in person -- how does your prayer life reflect the depth of care and investment Paul modeled for fellow believers?

The sermon emphasizes that the gospel is the very power of God, not merely a story or a set of beliefs -- how does recognizing that you carry the power of God when you share the gospel change the way you approach those conversations?

Paul wanted to visit the Roman church so that they could mutually encourage one another in their shared faith -- what does it reveal about spiritual maturity that even someone as seasoned as Paul expected to be encouraged by newer or less experienced believers?

The sermon points out that God's righteousness demands a standard of perfection that no human can meet, yet he sent his own Son to meet that standard on our behalf -- how does truly grasping this truth reshape the way you view both your own sin and God's love?

The sermon distinguishes between two Greek words for God's wrath, one being a passionate immediate anger and the other a slow, deliberate pursuit of justice -- how does understanding both dimensions of God's wrath deepen your appreciation for what Christ absorbed on the cross?

Paul stated that the faith of the Roman believers was being spoken of throughout the whole world -- what would it look like for your personal faith, or the faith of your church community, to become that publicly known and talked about?

The sermon argues that rejecting Christ and trusting in personal goodness is, in effect, telling Jesus his death was unnecessary -- how does framing salvation in those terms change the weight of the decision to either accept or reject the gospel?

God delays final judgment in part because he desires all people to repent and is giving more time for that to happen -- how should this truth about God's patience and long-suffering shape the urgency and tone with which we share the gospel with those around us?

The sermon challenges believers to examine whether they ever feel a sense of shame or hesitation when prompted to share the gospel -- which of the five reasons Paul gives for not being ashamed of the gospel do you find most personally compelling, and why?