

Our Motive for Ministry **Romans 1:14-16**

The Lord has given His church two principal tasks; to worship and to witness. Every Christian has been created to worship and called to witness. We must never forget that this is the main business of the church. That's why we are here today. We come here to worship God and study His Word so that we can be equipped and inspired to go out there as a witness for Christ.

When you read the bible you see time and time again God's people are commanded to go. Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28:19 "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.*" In Acts 8:26 the Lord said to Philip, "*Arise and go down to Gaza.*" So Philip got up went, and as he was going he witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch who in turn took the gospel to the continent of Africa. In Mark 5 we read about a certain man who was possessed by a legion of demons. After Jesus set him free He said to the man, "*Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you*" (Mark 5:19). Everywhere we turn in the Bible we are met with the command of our Lord to go and tell the good news.

There are two great commandments of the gospel. The first commandment of the gospel is to *come*. Jesus says, "*Come, follow me*" (Luke 18:22). Once you have answered His call to come to Him and be saved, you are then confronted with His command to *go and tell*.

I am confident that every Christian in this service today understands that we have been called by God to be a witness for Christ. We understand *what* we should do. We are to go and tell the good news of Jesus Christ. But I wonder how many of us really understand *why* we should go. What is it that should motivate you and me to get out of our pews and go for Jesus?

Turn with me to the first chapter of the book of Romans. In Romans 1:14-16 we see three reasons why every Christian should be motivated to go and tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. First of all we should go because of...

I. Our OBLIGATION to the Gospel

In verse 14, Paul says, "*I am a debtor.*" A debtor is someone who is bound by an obligation. When we hear the word debt we usually think about a financial obligation, such as a car loan or a mortgage on a house. But Paul is talking about another kind of debt here in verse 14. When he says, "*I am a debtor,*" he's not talking about a financial debt; he is talking about a spiritual debt which he owes.

First and foremost, Paul understood that he was a debtor to the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew what Jesus had done for him. Jesus died on a cross for him and forgiven all of his sins. Jesus made it possible for him to receive God's gift of eternal life. Jesus had given him a new heart and a new hope, the hope of heaven. And it is out of a sense of obligation and gratitude for what the Lord Jesus had done for him that Paul says, "*I am a debtor.*" He realized that he owed a debt to Christ that was so huge that he could never repay it in a thousand life times.

Let me ask you a question. Have you stopped to consider what Jesus has done for you? Jesus suffered, bled and died on a cross for you. When they placed that crown of thorns upon His head; when those nails were driven into His hands and feet, He suffered all of that for you.

If you are a Christian, the moment you repented of your sins Christ cleansed you and forgave you. He came into your heart and changed your life. He gave you eternal life and placed His Spirit within you.

Every day He has blessed your life beyond measure, and some day He will give you a home in heaven. If you understand all that Jesus has done *for you*, you will have a sense of obligation to be a witness *for Him*.

Not only was Paul a debtor to the Savior, he was also a debtor to all those who needed to know the Savior. Notice Paul says, *“I am a debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to wise and to unwise”* (Rom. 1:14). That was simply Paul’s way of saying, “I’m a debtor to every man.”

When you really understand what Christ has done for you and how He has saved you, you can’t help but think about the other people who need to hear about the Savior. Everybody needs to hear the good news. Everybody needs to hear that they can be forgiven of their sins. Everybody needs to hear that they can find the love, joy, and peace they long for. Everybody needs to hear that when they die they can go to heaven and be with God forever. Everybody needs to hear that message, that good news. The moment you hear the gospel message and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you become obligated to tell other people about Him.

What should be our motive for ministry? Why should we serve God and share the gospel? Why should we go and tell? Because we have an obligation, both to Christ who has saved us and to all those who need to be saved.

Paul mentions a second reason why we should be motivated to share the good news of Christ.

II. Our PASSION for the Gospel

Look at verse 15. Paul says, *“As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel”* (Rom. 1:15). The word *ready* is an interesting word. It’s a word that means eager or enthusiastic. Paul says, “Not only am I willing to share the gospel with all men, I’m enthusiastic about it!”

Why did Paul have such passion for the gospel? It was because Paul believed certain things. First of all he believed that Jesus is a great Savior. He believed Jesus was someone worth bragging about. Paul said in his letter to the Galatians, *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus”* (Gal. 6:14). Second, Paul believed that Jesus is the only Savior. The bible says, *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). Third, Paul believed that all men without Jesus are lost in sin. Paul wrote in Romans 3:23, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

I’ll tell you something else Paul believed. He believed that the ultimate and inescapable consequence of sin is to be separated from God in a place of eternal torment the bible calls hell. Do you know why Paul believed that? I’ll tell you why – because Jesus said so. Jesus said in Mark 9, *“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where ‘Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched’* (Mark 9:43-44).

If you really believe that Jesus is the one and only Savior; if you really believe that all men without Christ are lost in sin; if you really believe that your lost family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and classmates will go to hell if they aren't saved, it will create a passion in your heart to tell them about the Savior.

Why should we go and tell; because of our obligation *to* the gospel and *our* passion for the gospel. Finally, Paul mentions a third reason why we should be motivated to share the good news of Christ.

III. Our CONFIDENCE *in* the Gospel

Look at verse 16. Paul says, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.*" In a negative form, he is essentially saying that he is absolutely confident of the gospel.

Why was Paul so confident in the gospel message? There were two reasons for his confidence. Number one, Paul was confident because he recognized the *supremacy* of the gospel. The three great intellectual ideas of Paul's day were Greek logic, Roman law, and the Hebrew religion. Paul was thoroughly familiar with all three. He placed the gospel of Jesus Christ alongside the greatness of Greek logic, Roman law, and the Hebrew religion and said, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ," for the gospel is greater still.

Have you ever felt intellectually intimidated when attempting to share your faith with an unbeliever? Listen, don't you let anyone tell you that faith and the intellect are incompatible. You don't have to check your brains out at the door to become a believer in Jesus Christ. We have a message that can stand the test. You don't have to be ashamed of the good news of Jesus Christ. You don't have to back down from any discussion. You don't need to worry about defending the gospel; you just need to turn it loose.

Paul was confident because he recognized the *supremacy* of the gospel, but there's second reason why he was so confident. Paul was confident because he realized there is supernatural power in the gospel. Look again at verse 16. Paul says that the gospel "*is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.*"

The gospel contains supernatural power. The Romans understood power. Rome was all about power. Theirs was the power of chariots, swords, and iron chains. Here was this little, weak-eyed Jew heading up to Rome, the very seat military might and political power, with a message about a man dying on a cross. He said, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is the power of God."

Paul was never ashamed of the gospel. In Damascus he was forced to run for his life. In Lystra they stoned him and left him for dead. In Philippi they beat him and bound his feet in the stocks of the inner prison. In Rome, they put him in prison where the rats ran on the floor and the filthy insects crawled all over him. Then the day came when they opened up the prison door and carried Paul across the road to the guillotine and put him down on his knees and got ready to lay his head on the chopping block. I can just imagine saying, "Paul, look what this gospel has done for you now. Don't you want to recant? Don't you wish you had never been a gospel preacher?" And one last time the beloved Apostle says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes."

Dear church, that's our motive right there. If you are looking for a reason to serve God and share the gospel, that's it! Listen, it's not easy serving the Lord. It's not easy being a witness for Jesus. It's not easy getting on a plane and traveling for hours to a foreign country to share Christ. It's not easy piling into a passenger van and driving for hours and sometimes days to be on mission for Christ. The truth is, it's not easy to walk across the street and witness to a neighbor. But that is our mission. We are called to go and tell. We are called to set this lost world on fire with the soul saving, life changing gospel of Jesus Christ. Will you go? Will you tell?