

Crossroads Baptist Church  
January 29, 2006 10:00  
Romans 1: 13-17  
Romans #5

## **“Paul’s Mission”**

### **Part I**

Everybody is taking about purpose and mission. Rick Warren’s book “the Purpose Driven Life” has caused everyone to question “Why Am I Here?”

It is always helpful to explore great men and women to discover how they approached life. What were their values and sense of purpose and mission?

We come to this early section in Romans where I believe Paul shares with us his mission – his passion – his heartbeat. Let’s look today and next Sunday at three areas that characterized his mission.

### **I. His life’s mission came from God, not by his own initiative.**

Instead of going on a search to discover one’s purpose, I believe your purpose or mission comes by revelation.

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.” NKJV

I see this as well with Paul. In verses 8-12 Paul is referring to his prayer life and birthed out of his prayer and walk with God, he shares his passion for life. His calling.

What are we passionate about? What cranks our tractor? What gets us up in the morning or keeps us late at night? Ask God to reveal that to you.

### **II. His life’s mission was characterized by others first.**

Verse 14 He said he was a debtor. Now that could mean that he owes them something because they had done something for him. So he felt obligated to them.

But our life is not best served when we think we owe someone or somebody. That leads to bitterness and anger. God is not into either one of those. Our motivation for life should not be that we owe.

I know we have the bumper stickers that say, “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go.” But life is more than that.

More importantly we do not owe God. Paul did not say that he was a debtor to God.

He had been set from the debt to God – the debt of the payment of sin. All we owe is the debt of sin and when we trust Christ, that debt is paid and we are free. You can not be free to discover your purpose unless you are free from being the servant of sin.

His debt was to the Greeks (who spoke the classical Greek language) and the barbarians who speech sounded like babbling. In this, we see Paul says that his life is for all people of all languages of all the world.

His life was characterized by others.

You will never find true meaning in life and purpose as long as that purpose centers on you.

So he declares, “as much as in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”

### **III. His life’s mission was characterized by something bigger than himself.**

As clearly as anywhere in Paul’s writings, we see what was the heartbeat of Paul. His life was the gospel. Notice what Paul thinks about the gospel and in a real sense, he summarizes the book of Romans here:

#### **1. The gospel is not something of which to be ashamed.**

The greatest struggle for the gospel is not in Hollywood, or Washington, DC, but its in the mind of believers. Are we ashamed of Christ and the gospel? The world can not shame us into not sharing the gospel any more than they can encourage us to share the gospel.

Paul says he is not intimidated by others when it comes to the gospel. All the learned religionists, all the philosophers of Rome do not intimidate Paul. They did not intimidate him in Athens when they laughed at him. They did not intimidate him in Corinth when they saw him as a fool. They did not intimidate him in Philippi when they imprisoned him. They did not stop him in Thessalonica when they chased him out of town. His stoning in Galatia did not slow down the gospel train. He was nothing but an irritant and sore spot in Jerusalem but he pressed on. And now he is ready to come to Rome, the political capital of the world and they are not about to cause him to be hoodwinked there, either. He is proud of the gospel.

Why was he proud?

#### **2. The gospel is the power of God.**

The word used here is *dunamis*, we get the word dynamite from it.

The Romans were boasting about their power that conquered the world. But the real power is not to conquer a man putting him in prison or the ability to bring someone under your subjection, but the power that can release a man from his own prison.

Man really wants to change. That's why advertisers spend billions of dollars because they know we want to look better, feel better, think better and have better experiences.

In Jeremiah 13:23 Jeremiah asks, "Can a leopard change his spots? Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" "You have just about as much chance to change your own heart as you can the color of your skin, unless you are Michael Jackson. But we can't change ourselves.

We are better educated today than ever but unchanged in the human heart. They tell us we are more tolerant and have more equal justice for all people, but the heart is still wicked. We have more religions and spiritual experiences but still are immoral. What we need is not a better system of education, politics to bring a social reform, or a religion with new ideas. We just need the power of God.

II Timothy 3:5 speaks of churches and people who have "a form of godliness but denying its power."

The power of God is all we have to change lives.

So, behind the gospel is the power. How much power is behind the gospel? The Bible says, "God has great power," Psalm 79:11. The Bible says, "God has strong power," Psalm 89:13. The Bible says, "God has glorious power," Exodus 15:6. He has mighty power, Job 9:4. He has everlasting power, Isaiah 26:4. He has sovereign power, Romans 9:21. He has effectual power, Isaiah 43:13. He has irresistible power, Deuteronomy 32:39. He has incomparable power, Psalm 89:8. He has unsearchable power, Job 5:9. Jeremiah 10:12 says: "It is He who made the earth by His power." Jeremiah 27:5 says: "It is I who by My great power and My outstretched arm have made the earth."

In Psalm 33:8 and 9 it says: "Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him for He spoke and it came to be." What power .... what power.

In the New Testament, Matthew 28:18 He said: "All power is given unto Me." He had the power to cast out demons. He had power over sickness, every illness, to heal. He had power over the universe to provide for the needs of the people. He had the power to still the storm, the power to walk on the water. He had power over death. He called Lazarus out of the grave. He gave life to the dead son of the widow of Nain. He gave life to the daughter of Jairus. He raised Himself from the

dead. But most of all, Romans 1:16 says it, "He had the power of God unto salvation." He had power to save.

It reminds me of the old story about the vacuum cleaner salesman that went out to the farmhouse. And he walked in there with his typical motor-mouth approach and didn't wait for the lady to say a word. She opened the door and he was in the living room. And he said - Mam, I want to tell you about this vacuum cleaner. It will suck up everything in this house, you have to be careful you might even lose your floor it's so powerful and I'm going to .... And she started - Well .... wait a.... And he just kept going. He said - I'm going to show you how much this will do. And he dumped ashes in the middle of the floor out of his bag, and garbage and junk and everything. And he said - Ma'am, if this vacuum doesn't suck this up in two minutes I'll eat it with a spoon. And finally she got an opportunity to speak and she said - Well, you'd better start eating, we ain't got no electricity.

Well, as Christians, we have electricity and more!

The gospel is more powerful than the atomic bomb. This power not only has the power to destroy but create. It will destroy sin and create a new heart and a new person.

### 3. The gospel is continuing leading us to salvation.

The gospel is "unto salvation." Power is relative. It takes power to run landscaping lighting, it takes power to run my air conditioning unit, it takes power to run the nuclear plant at TVA.

But we are not talking about the same amount of power because of the situation.

In salvation, we are talking about a power that is beyond nuclear and atomic power. The reason is the power necessary for salvation is enough to raise a dead man and secure his release from hell. Its power to release one from the deadly grip of sin and Satan.

Ephesians 2:5 says we are dead in trespasses but the grace of God made us alive.

This salvation is a continual work of God in our lives. He has saved me from hell and saved me for Heaven. But He is still working to get all the sin and smell of hell out of my life while getting all the righteousness and life of Heaven into me now.

Almost no other New Testament book will show us this wonderful progression like Romans. We will rejoice over what has happened – our election, our predestination, our calling, our justification. But we will also see the precious truth of sanctification and glorification.

Hebrews 9:28 “Christ..will appear a second time for salvation...to those who eagerly await Him.” The final aspect of our salvation happens at the Second Coming.”

Romans 5:9-10 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood (that is the present reality of our salvation), we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

Romans 13:11 “Salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.”

We will conclude this message next Sunday, but let me ask you, “Who are you putting your faith to get to Heaven? Are you believing in yourself? Hoping to be able to do better deeds than bad deeds and hoping the good tilts the scales in your favor?

Are you believing in church attendance?

There is only one source of faith that will get you to Heaven – Jesus.