

Romans series #4 starting with 1:8

Meeker Christian Church November 6, 2022

Today the sermon main theme is thankfulness. It comes in the series from the book of Romans and today covering Romans 1:8-10 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world* 9 *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you* **10** *always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.*

Since we are in the month of celebrating Thanksgiving, let's open our Bibles and our minds for this instruction that was divinely inspired through the Apostle Paul for his generation and all generations to follow until the Lord calls Christians to join Him in the air.

Romans 1:8 *First,* By starting the passage with the word "first" Paul considers what follows as a basic Christian need/ a primary requirement/ a matter of greatest importance for the maturing person in Christian faith to understand, model and instruct others.

Romans 1:8-10 *First, I* //Then Paul makes it clear with the personal pronoun "I" that he is not only instructing other believers to do it, but includes himself as a primary example as he also records for us in 1 Corinthians 11:1 *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

Romans 1:8-10 *First, I thank* //Next in this 8th verse is the verb "thank." It is striking to note that in Paul's introductory comments to the book of Romans we find a theological principal easily unnoticed and overlooked, and I fear little understood. Paul already established it's *first* importance for the person desiring to grow closer to Jesus. It is also of *first* importance for the person feasting on discipline that results in a purpose driven life. It is also of *first* importance for a life to fulfill all righteousness.

The Greek word for *thank* is eucharisto whose definition is: “properly, acknowledging that "God's grace works well," i.e. for our eternal gain and His glory; to give thanks -or- literally, "thankful for God's good grace." Eucharisto is also the word from which we get Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. One aspect of our weekly practice of communion is our expressing of thanks for the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus for our salvation.

Romans 1:8 *First, I thank eucharistō my God Theō*

Paul, by choosing to use the name THEO, the Greek form of one name for God emphasizes the sacredness of being thankful because it is an expression to our Holy God. And because expressing thanks is presented to God, it make it a sacred activity!

Paul’s choice of the noun form “Theo” for God, depending on his audience may have considered that reference in contrast to the vast number of false gods of the surrounding cultures. Paul wanted there to be no possibility of mistaken understanding to whom thanks was to be given. There was only one God of the created universe and it is to Him all thanks, all glory, and all praise is to be given and just how sacred that activity is for the believer who **fears God.**

As a footnote: There are some 92 verses in the Bible that contain some form of “fearing God.” Perhaps we need reminded that the God of love and every good attribute in creation is to be held in greatest awe and esteem. We are never to be presumptive, or demanding of He who has all knowledge and power in the universe. For children, that is an example of the respect they are to be taught regarding parents. The passage for children raised in a Christian atmosphere is Colossians 3:20 *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

In a society that has become so accustomed to “material things” as to consider them entitlements or something due them because of their uniqueness or special position held in life, we have tended to minimize thankfulness for the creator of all things and

sustainer of our lives. **It is a sacred duty to be thankful. It is a sacred obligation to be thankful. It is a sacred privilege to be thankful. It is a sacred practice to express thankfulness.** All in the awe and esteem fear of our Holy God.

Hear are some supporting scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 12:13 *The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God** and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*

Ephesians 5:20 *always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Colossians 2:7 *rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with **thankfulness.***

Colossians 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in you hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. **And be thankful.***

Colossians 4:2 *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and **thankful.***

Hebrews 12:28 *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be **thankful**, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.*

There it is again fear or respect for God and expressing thankfulness abundantly and unrestrained!

Thankfulness is a blessing filled, sacrament encouraged, divinely commanded, apostolic example, sacred activity, Bible instructed endeavor that rightfully should be practiced everyday and frequently throughout the day. /// By the way, here is the takeaway from today's message, going out of your way to express thanks to others is a living, walking, breathing testimony of righteous behavior that will almost always be gratefully received!!!! And with it is here is marriage counseling 101 --- thankfulness is especially true as an interchange for spouses. Quit being presumptuous toward your spouse and if anything, be overbearing with your expressions of thankfulness. It generally works quite well in any relationship, friendship and in the workplace as well.

Besides when we are expressing and living thankfulness we are filling time and using energy that satan would otherwise have access to for criticism or negativism. (repeat)

Back to our verse: Romans 1:8 First, *I thank eucharisto my God Theō through Jesus Christ for all of you.*

Paul gives instruction on yet another important thing for us to understand. Jesus as our intercessor is a common message in the New Testament: Jesus talks of it extensively in John chapter 17, look specifically at verses 20-21 Jesus is interceding for us: *“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

Just so you know where Jesus is right now and why He continues to intercede for us: Colossians 3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

Oh yes and that is another example of why we pray in the name of Jesus

Back to our verse: Romans 1:8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.*

Yet another doctrinal statement of Jesus is being expressed in the way of thanks as Paul continues to open the eyes, ears and heart of his listeners/readers, do you remember Matthew 28:19-20? *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

The Holy Spirit is inspiring Paul to relate another reason for thankfulness is because of the word of God being shared with everyone because of faith for which Paul is proclaiming as yet another incredible sacred reason for thankfulness in that 8th verse.

because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. At the time of Paul's writing - around the mid-point of the first century, Rome dominated most of the then known world, or at least what was considered as the civilized world. The rest of the world outside of that realm, and some from within was often controlled by uncivilized, savage, often barbaric tribes. Our civilized mind-set is incapable of readily comprehending just how like wild animals they were. And in actuality the Romans were not far from ruling with those basic survival instincts as seen in their disregard of the value human life. Our Sunday School lesson this morning revealed in our century a similar control in Sudan.

So in the marginal civilized world under Roman domination, because of their road system, slave trade, and what they called "pact romana" or Roman peace, tribal warfare had by in large been suppressed in the area under their rule and citizens could travel and exchange goods over a very wide geographical area.

It was in great measure because of these Roman benefits that the Jewish religion had spread and also prompted much of the spread of Christianity for a time before persecution set in by the Roman Emperors.

Paul was aware and experiencing all those things, and still expressed thanks to the Church in Rome for being a part of that distribution of Christianity.

Perhaps that 8th verse is also meant to be prophetic. In the nearly 2,000 years since it's writing the gospel has indeed arrived or is available in all of the world. The reality is that gospel distribution and persecution for faith and martyrdom for the gospel apparently is increasing proportionally. In my experience the subculture of Christian faith is very gradually becoming an underground, shrouded, personally shielded practice overtly in some places, subvertly in our own. While at the same time in some areas there is more and more geographical movement seeking for communities of righteous. Other scriptures that support the idea of Paul's thanks expression being also prophetic:

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Back to *Romans 1:8-10* First, *I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.* As a continuing model for us Paul concludes these comments regarding his thankfulness with these exhortative personal testimonies:

For God is my witness – Paul stands before God with his testimony reminding us to do the same in our everyday life. His life, and our lives are to reflect the light of Jesus to the dark world around us.

whom I serve with my spirit – not only is Paul dedicating his material body but also the spiritual part of his being which is created after the form of God. A present reminder of the spirit world which surrounds us.

in the gospel of his Son. All of Paul's passion and ambition was fundamentally for the purpose of obedience and reference for the presentation of the glorious good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

*that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers.* cross reference to

1 Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.* i.e. all of life is to be with the thankful attitude and expression of receiving communication from the throne of heaven.

asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. Paul's prayer was specifically answered we will learn later on, but surely not in the way he expected. In like manner everyone of our prayers are answered, some are yes, some are no and some take time and may not be as we expected.

Romans 1:8-10 frequently referenced

Colossians 3:20

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Ephesians 5:20

Colossians 2:7

Colossians 3:15

Colossians 4:2

Hebrews 12:28

John 17:20-21

Colossians 3:1

Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew 24:14

1 Thessalonians 5:17